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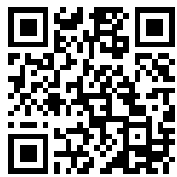

THE ROYALS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1899 1902

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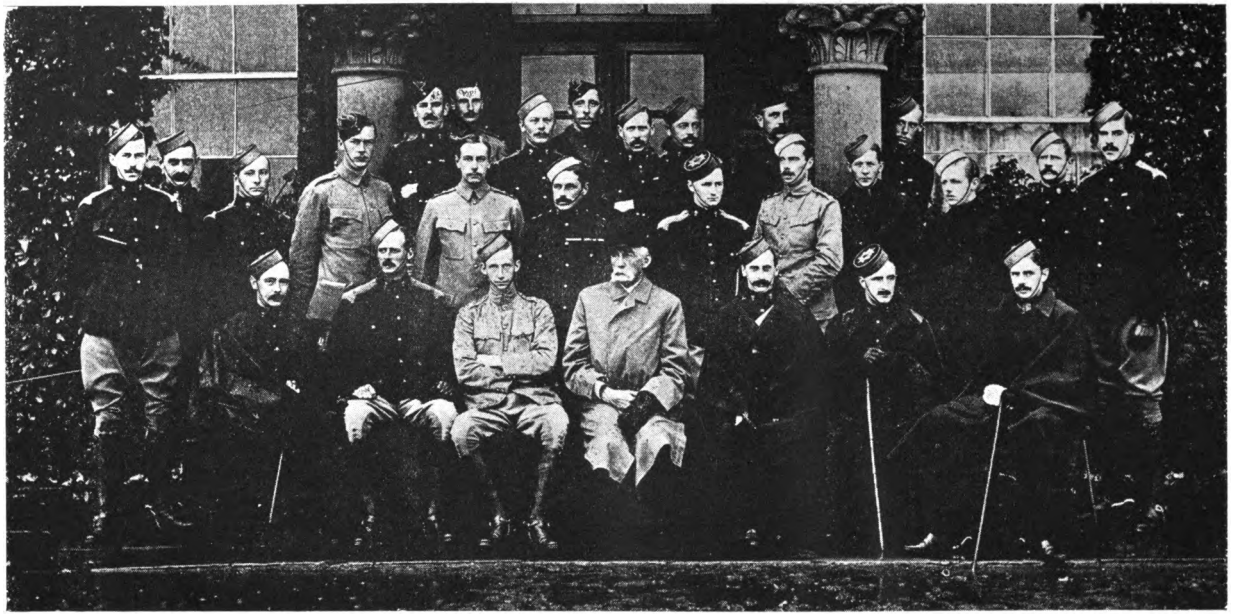

Group of Officers of the Royal Dragoons taken at Hounslow just prior to embarkation.

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THE ROYALS IN SOUTH AFRICA

(1899-1902)

EDITED BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL E. MAKINS, D.S.O.
THE ROYAL DRAGOONS.

PUBLISHED BY

THE EDITOR OF "THE EAGLE".
THE ROYAL DRAGOONS (SOUTH AFRICA)

1914.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT was considered opportune some two years ago, while the regiment was serving as part of the garrison of South Africa, and while events were still fresh in the minds of many, to publish in the columns of "The Eagle" the services of The Royal Dragoons during the South African War 1899—1902.

Captain P. E. Hardwick, while Adjutant, edited a diary from the various diaries kept by officers during the war. Captain Hardwick's diary is the basis of this narrative, which I have in my turn elaborated, adding a certain amount of explanatory matter, to show the circumstances surrounding our various movements from official and other recognised sources.

Some officers have very kindly come forward with photographs, which they took during the war, and the best of these are reproduced. Readers of "The Eagle" were asked to bring to notice any inaccuracies they might find, but as no communications have been received from them, it may be assumed that all the facts, based on the respective diaries, are correct.

The narrative does not pretend to any literary merit, so no apologies are given,—but it is published simply as a record of service, and as a guide to some future historian of the regiment.

ERNEST MAKINS,
Lieut. Colonel.
The Royal Dragoons.

Potchefstroom,
January 1st, 1914.

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CONTENTS.

Page.

PERIOD I 1
Mobilization. Embarkation. Strength. Voyage. Cape Town. Durban. Maritzburg. Frere.

PERIOD II 20
Colenso. Spion Kop. Vaalkrantz. Colenso. Relief of Ladysmith

PERIOD III... 50
Operation after the Relief. Sundays River. Niblick Hill. Ingagane and Rooipynt. Newcastle. Elandsberg Trek.

PERIOD IV... 74
Belfast. Roos Senekal Trek. Eastern Transvaal Trek. Pretoria. Magaliesberg Valley. Springfontein.

PERIOD V 100
After Smuts and Kritzinger. Ficksburg. Lichtenstein.

PERIOD VI... 140
Senekal. Drive in conjunction with Locke Elliot. Ficksburg. Drive to Valsh River. After De Wet.

PERIOD VII 161
Commando Drift. Wolmaransstad—Klerksdorp Drive. Bloemhof. Schweizer Reneke. Drive to Vryburg—Mafeking Railway.

PERIOD VIII 189
Peace.

Appendix A. 196
Appendix B. 198
Appendix C. 199

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Page
Group of Officers of the Royal Dragoons taken at Hounslow just prior to embarkation.	IV
S.S. "Manchester Port."	2
S.S. "Manchester Port."	3
"Going!"	4
"Gone!"	5
Table Bay	6
The Bluff. Durban	7
Upper Horse Deck	8
Durban.—"Landing Horses."	9
Entraining at Maritzburg	10
Camp at Maritzburg	11
Broken bridge and temporary trestle bridge. Frere	12
Wreck of armoured Train. Frere	13
Brig. General J. F. Burn-Murdoch and "Bones."	14
Brigade-Major A. H. Taylor 13th. Hussars	15
Lieut. The Marquis of Tullibardine D.S.O. (attached to Regt.)	16
Captain E. Eckersley R.A.M.C., Lieut. and Quartermaster F. Burch and Major Gladstone A.V.D. at tea	17
Captain E. Eckersley, R.A.M.C.	18
Colenso Railway Bridge	21
Captain J. W. J. Hardman (on left)	22
4.7 gun. Frere.	23
4.7 gun in action. Frere	24
2nd. Lieut. T. D. Pilkington.	26
Captain F. C. Poole R.A.	29
Brig. Gen. J. F. Burn-Murdoch	35
Tugela River. (Showing pontoon)	40
Tugela River (below Colenso)	41
Lieut. The Lord Charles Fitzmaurice	42
Umbulwana Hill	45
Town Hall. Ladysmith. (Note shell-hole in clock tower)	46
Panorama of Ladysmith	47
Convent Ladysmith. (Sir George White's Headquarters.)	48
Tendega Farm	54
Drycut Farm	55
Duckponds Farm	56
"Jemima."	57
12 pdr. Gun. Rooi Pynt	59

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Page

Fort Makins. Rooi Pynt 61
Piet Uys' Farm 63
Rider Haggards' Farm. Rooi Pynt 65
2nd. Lieut. P. F. Forbes-Leith... 66
Watering in Buffalo River 67
Lieut. H. B. Fawcus, R.A.M.C. (on right.) Seated in Fort Makins, Rooi Pynt 69
Passing stores over Chaka Spruit 70
Lieutenant Leighton. 71
Our Naval 12 pdr.... 75
Boer native Scout. All this man's saddlery belonged to "The Blues" and was stamped R. H. G. 81
Lieut. E. York inspecting his bag of geese... 82
Watering at Lake Chrissie 83
Watering at Lake Chrissie 84
Komati River 85
Swazi Warriors, Steynsburg 87
Komati River 88
Steynsdorp Valley 89
Officers Mess... 91
Officers Mess and Bivouacks 93
Cape Cart and Bivouack 95
Bivouack 97
Officers in guards van en route to Springfontein. (Lieut. Tate, Major Carr-Ellison, Captain Steele, Lieut. Glyn)... 98
A typical Russian 101
Lieut. The Lord Charles Fitzmaurice 105
Commissie Bridge. Caledon River 107
Lichtenstein, October, 1901. The late Lieutenant M. Knowles with a patrol, all disguised as Boers, setting out to try to capture two Boers who had been seen frequently observing the Camp. The names of those two can be distinguished in the picture are : Sergeants Cook, Kendon, Reimers, Mott; Corporal Fordom : Privates Payne, Russell, Baldock, Draw, Green, Kelly, Wilson, Woolnough, Lockwood, Bunker, Edgington, Nicholls, Foxon and Elder. Lieut. Knowles is the mounted figure in the foreground. The nondescript outfits were borrowed from the Kaffir transport drivers. 109
"C" Squadron Camp at Lichtenstein 111
English Hunter 113
An American Remount 115
Commissie Bridge. Caledon River 117
"Sic Transit"... 119

Digitized by Google

Page

Captain R. Burns... 121
Captain E. Makins 123
Lieut. and Quartermaster F. Burch 125
Captains H. D. McNeile and G. F. Steele 127
Captain H. D. McNeile and Lieut. Colonel The Lord Basing 129
Hauling gun up Spitz Kop 131
Lieut. W. D. Grant 133
Captain T. M. S. Pitt 135
Captain T. M. S. Pitt and the Hon. A. Hamilton-Russell... 137
Lieut. Hon. W. E. Egerton ("a short shift") 138
Boer Pony 140
Boer Pony 142
Basuto Pony 143
English Polo Pony. (Succumbed the same day as this photograph was taken) 146
Lieut. T. C. Gurney 148
Lieut. J. M. Tate attached A.V.D.... 150
R. S. M. Parsons 152
Major R. H. Carr-Ellison 154
Major R. H. Carr-Ellison, Captain G. Steele and Captain E. Makins 156
Lieut. T. P. Godman 158
Vaal River. Bloemhof 162
Vaal River. Bloemhof 164
Vaal River. Bloemhof 166
Vaal River. Bloemhof 168
Vaal River 170
Hospital Tonga. Crossing the Vaal 172
Catching Fish in the Vaal. (The explosion of the Bomb) ... 174
Lieut. and Quartermaster F. Burch 176
Lieuts. P. E. Hardwick, Hon. W. E. Egerton, Hon. C. H. C. Guest 178
Lieut. H. McL. Lambert and "Scout." 180
Captain the Hon. A. Hamilton-Russell... 182
Lieut. H. McL. Lambert 186
Lieuts. P. Leighton and P. E. Hardwick 187
H. S. H. Prince Francis of Teck D.S.O. (posing for the photographer) 190
Arrival of General De Wet at Bloemfontein on his way to the Peace Conference at Vereeniging, 1902 192
Lieut. M. Knowles 194
D.S.O. Queens and Kings Medals. D.C.M. South African Medals and decorations 195

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PERIOD I.

The regiment had been quartered at Hounslow, with a squadron at Hampton Court since September, 1897; and after manoeuvres in 1899 arrived back in quarters with rumours of war in the air. The situation became acute, and at last on October 7th the regiment was ordered to mobilize for service in South Africa, and the same day "B" Squadron marched in to join Headquarters at Hounslow from Hampton Court.

Mobilization, while it lasts, entails a good deal of hard work upon everybody. The regiment at this time was strong both in men and horses, and to bring it up to war strength (eliminating recruits, and men under twenty years of age, and sick), required only 116 reservists and 33 horses. The ensuing days were spent in clothing the men—not so easy then as now in the days of service dress,—in rubbing the rust off the reservists, and in training the new horses. All officers were recalled from leave, and were very busy indeed—running up to London, when possible, to collect war kit and make their adieus and preparations.

We eventually got our sailing orders to embark at Tilbury on the 29th in the S.S. "Manchester Port," a Liverpool ship of 10,000 tons of the Houston Line. She had been trading in ordinary times between Liverpool and America in cattle, and was sent round to Tilbury where we were to embark. Almost at the last moment, it was found that the hay, which had been put on board, was bad, in fact so damp that it was not safe. Consequently our embarkation was delayed for 24 hours. The question of the hay, and as to who was responsible for its shipment, was subsequently brought up in the House of Commons.

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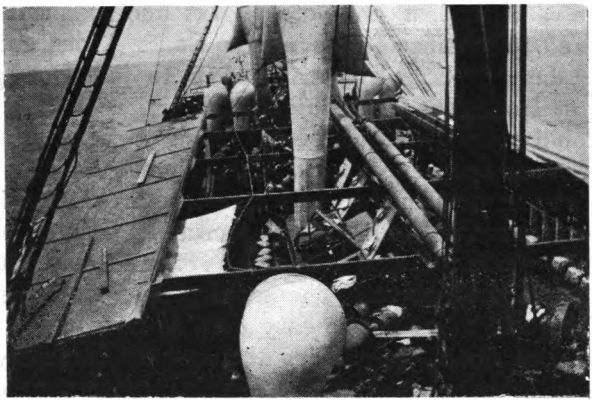
After an extremely short and uncomfortable night we awoke to a perfectly horrible early morning—(Monday Oct. 30th)—pitch dark and a fine driving, drizzling rain. The first of the five special trains with men and horses left Hounslow (Whitton Station) about 2. a.m., and trains ran at intervals until 9 a.m., when the last men and horses were on the way. Tilbury was reached in about 4 hours. "C" Squardon embarked first and so had their



S.S. "Manchester Port."

horses on the lower deck; then "A" Squadron, and finally "B" Squadron. The "Manchester Port" had ample accommodation for horses, which were put in stalls erected on the cattle decks and upper deck, the latter being reserved for officers' chargers and sick horses. The accommodation for officers was not good, as these ships were not built to carry passengers; the cabins were hastily constructed, mostly round the engine room space, and were very hot. However, everything that could be done had been carried out by the Company, under the personal direction of Mr. Houston, M.P., the Chairman, to make us as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

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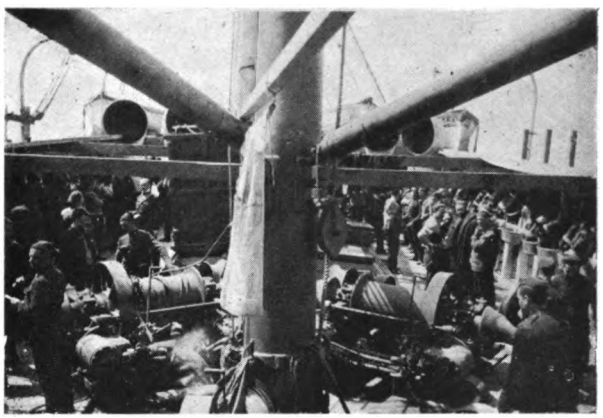
A great many people came down from London to see the last of us and wish us good luck, amongst others Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for War. The embarkation was carried out expeditiously and well, and we were soon ready to start. We cast off at 4.30 p.m. and dropped down into the river where we remained for the night.



S.S. "Manchester Port."

The total strength embarking was:—

Officers	26
N.C.O.'s and Men ...	561
Horses	451
Officers' Chargers ...	57

The following is a list of the officers who embarked:—

Colonel J. F. Burn-Murdoch. Commanding.
Major The Hon. J. E. Lindley.
" The Lord Basing.
" R. H. Carr-Ellison.
Captain J. M. Rogers.
" J. W. Burns.
" E. Makins.
" The Hon. A. Hamilton-Russell.

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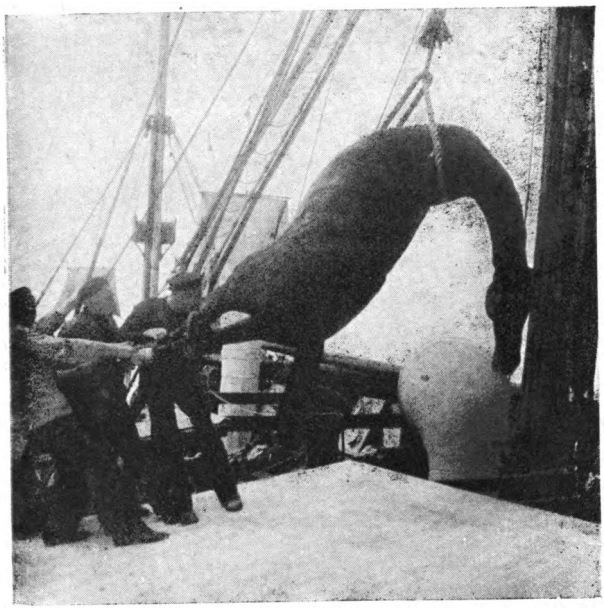
Lieutenant H. D. McNeile.
„ T. M. S. Pitt.
„ C. A. Calvert.
„ The Hon. C. H. C. Guest.
„ E. York.
„ Lord Charles Fitzmaurice.



"Going!"

Lieutenant B. E. P. Leighton.
„ R. F. Glyn.
„ T. P. Godman.
2nd Lieutenants T. D. Pilkington.
„ P. E Hardwick.
„ Sir Merrik Burrell, Bart.
Captain and Adjutant G. F. Steele.
Lieutenant and Quartermaster F. Burch

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Attached.
Major W. Gladstone, A.V.D.
Major E. Eckersley, R.A.M.C.
Lieut. The Marquis of Tullibardine, D.S.O., R.H.G.
Lieut. N. M. Johnstone, 11th Hussars.

"Gone!"

Tullibardine had been detailed to accompany us at the last moment, as his brother officer Charteris, who was to have come, had shot himself in the leg with a Mauser pistol just previously, while examining into its method of working.

We were off again at daylight on the following morning (Tuesday) with orders to go straight to Cape Town without putting in anywhere, and dropped our

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pilot at 1 p.m. The signal station at Dungeness signalled that there had been heavy fighting in South Africa with many casualties on our side, but did not say where it had taken place.

The next day there was still a glimpse of England when we got on deck; we rounded Ushant and got into the bay by about 8 p.m. The sea got up and there

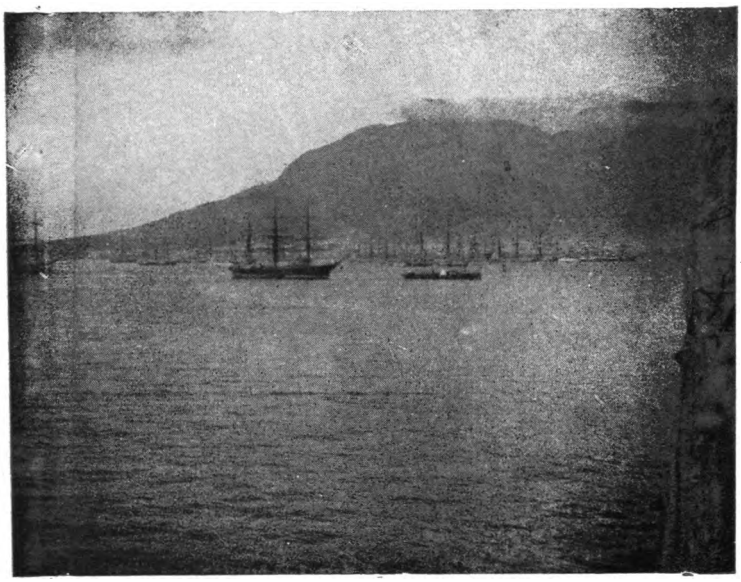

Table Bay.

were many absentees at dinner. During the night there was a good roll, and during the next day several men and a few officers were *hors de combat.* The first casualty among the horses occurred on that day from influenza. The rough weather caused some damage to the horse-boxes on the upper deck, and the ship's carpenter, never having been to sea before, was too ill to work, so Sergt. Scott, our saddle-tree maker, had his hands full.

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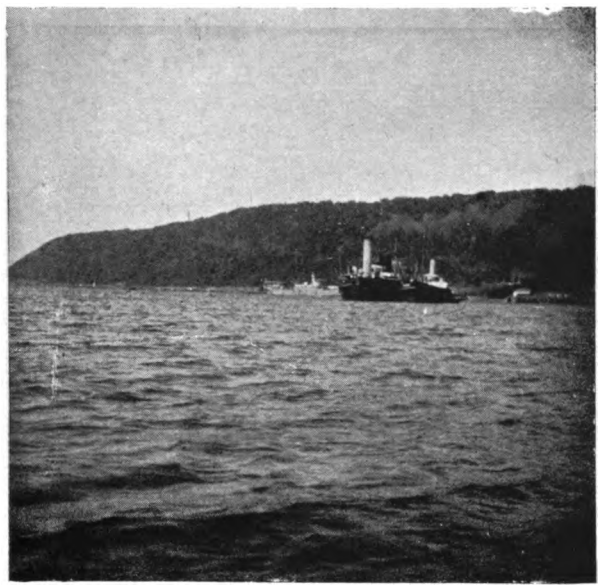
The sea gradually calmed down; the Canary Islands were passed just before sunrise, and the temperature rose. The first batch of officers and men were inoculated against enteric and some of them felt somewhat seedy in consequence.

At that time this inoculation was an innovation and it was difficult to persuade all the men to be done. One



The Bluff. Durban.

man called Mitchell in "B" Squardon, who was reported to have been a Sergt. in an Infantry Regiment and served in India, persuaded many men that it was not necessary; and as inoculation was voluntary, a number of men were not inoculated. However, inexorable fate ordained that Pte. Mitchell should be one of the first men to succumb to enteric. Everyone is now more sensible, and each man is done as a matter of course;

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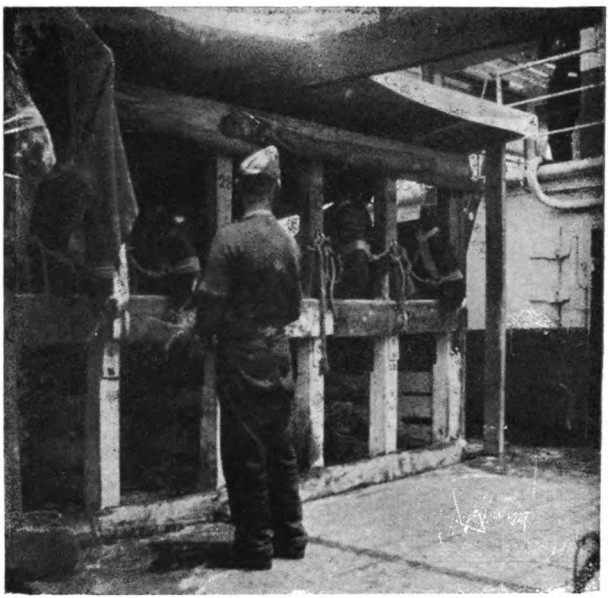
(and in a good hour be it said, we have not had a case of enteric for three years).

And so the voyage continued without very many incidents, except for a few horses succumbing occasionally; altogether 27 died on board, and with two more destroyed on the quay at Durban, amounted to 29 officers' and troop horses in all. The malady looked suspicious-



Upper Horse Deck.

ly like Pink Eye, perhaps left us as a legacy from some previous ship-load. The ship was hove to on the 10th to overhaul the engines. On the 11th Pte. Dunmow fell down an open hatchway to the bottom of the ship and was killed instantly; he was buried in the evening, the Colonel reading the service. The ship was stopped again on the 15th for two and a half hours, as something went

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wrong with the engines This day the mail boat, R.M.S. Briton, passed us with troops on board, signalling that there had been a good deal of fighting and reporting a victory on the 7th instant.

We arrived in Table Bay soon after 9 a.m. on Wednesday, November 22nd, and were ordered alongside

Durban.—"Landing Horses."

for orders, but steamed out and anchored in the Bay about midday, having got orders to go on to Durban in the evening. These orders put a stop to our serving with the Greys and Innsikillings as "The Union Brigade" which we had expected to do. Burns and Makins went ashore to get pay for the men, and brought back Rickman of the Welsh Fusiliers. We sailed for Durban about 6 p.m.

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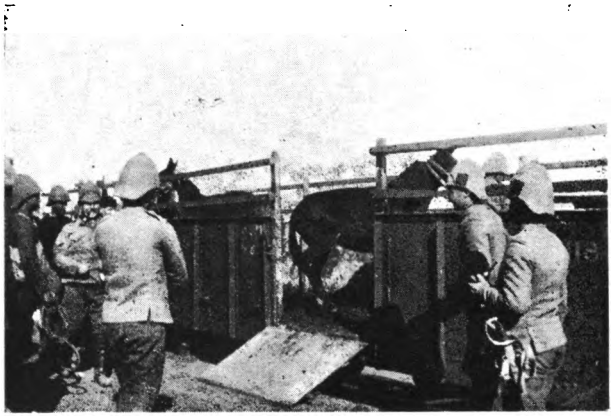
The horses seemed better for the short rest and on Saturday, 25th, we sighted the light-house on the bluff off Durban about 3 p.m. and arrived off the town about 4 p.m. slowed down and waited for orders. A tug arrived with orders to go straight into port, and go up country by train in three hours time. However, this was countermanded later and we were told to disembark as soon as possible and wait till the morning before going on. A very busy evening was spent, unloading all the



Entraining at Maritzburg.

kits, etc., and the horses were left on board till the following morning. General Sir Redvers Buller arrived this day from Capetown.

After a very busy and disturbed night, we started unloading the horses at 6 a.m., November 26th. Two horses had to be destroyed on the quay, being too sick to recover. The horses were then entrained at once into open iron cattle trucks--18 to the truck. The iron sides of the trucks were very low, and were built up with uprights and crosspieces, roughly put together and rather insecure.

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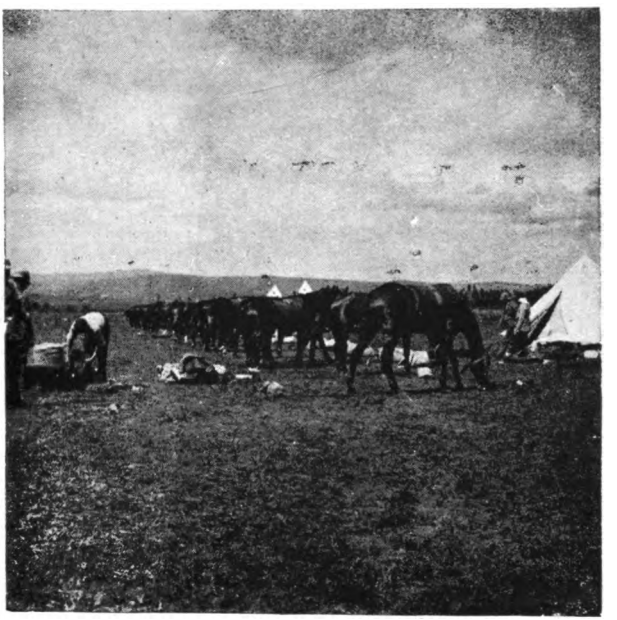
The inhabitants were very kind to us, and gave the men presents of fruit and other eatables, asking for regimental badges in return.

The journey up country was necessarily very slow, as the railway in Natal is made to suit the country, not the country the railway; thus there are no tunnels, but the line creeps round and over the hills, and in conse-



Camp at Maritzburg.

quence the gradients are very steep. Then again horses kept on getting down in the trucks, owing to their not being very strong on their legs after the long sea journey; and it often took some time to get them straight again. One horse was taken out more dead than alive and had to be left behind at a small station: however, it was well taken care of, and forwarded later.

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We stopped at Inchanga, where the horses were watered and the men had their dinners. There were five special trains; the first train left Durban at 8.45 a.m., and the last train reached Pietermaritzburg about 8.15 p.m. By this time it was pitch dark, with a fine drizzle falling. As each train arrived, it was off-loaded and the

Broken Bridge and temporary.
Trestle Bridge. Frere.

horses were led three miles to the Race Course, where we encamped. Owing to the darkness and rain it was impossible to get things straight, and the next day, when a lovely morning broke, the squadron lines were found to be at curious angles to each other, and the tents a good bit out of their dressing. However, this

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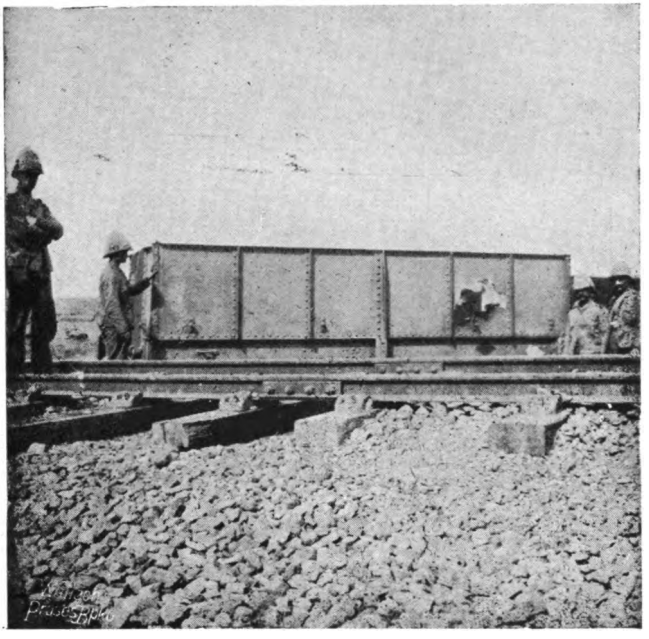
was soon rectified, and everything was put ship-shape and dried. Two horses died, but it was hoped that this would put an end to casualties, as the horses should now pick up and recover from their long journey. The men were squeezed for room, as only two tents were allowed per troop. The race course, where we encamped,



Wreck of armoured Train. Frere.

was on the top of the hill about one and a half miles from the town. Pietermaritzburg itself lay in a hollow, and there were some fine buildings for South Africa, notably the House of Assembly and other Government Buildings. The most fashionable mode of conveyance was a ricksha, a light cart drawn by a native, who jogged along at quite a respectable pace. It was very

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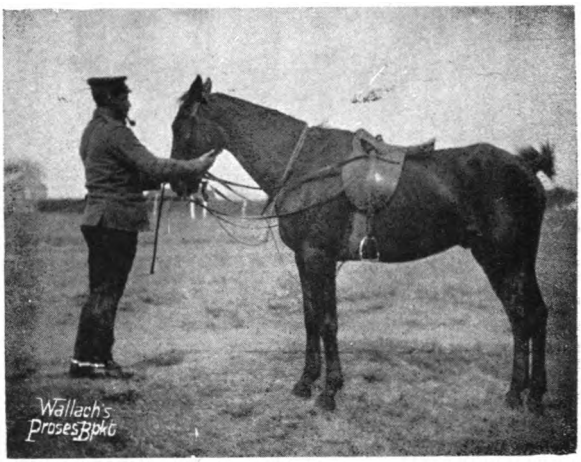
hot, being close upon midsummer. News was scanty, that is to say, reliable news, though there were plenty of rumours. On the previous day, a Boer patrol was said to have been seen on the heights to the north of the town. It appeard that the Boers, after the fight at Willow Grange, were hesitating and inclined to return towards Ladysmith.

We stayed at Pietermaritzburg for a week. Various dealers brought up horses and ponies for sale, and



Brig. General J. F. Burn-Murdoch and "Bones."

several changed hands, mostly ponies. All the horses got quiet exercise and picked up well. We got news of the fight on Modder River on Nov. 29th and the next day Burns left at 3 a.m. to go to Durban to fetch remounts. The mule transport was collected under the orders of Lieut. T. M. S. Pitt, our transport officer. Nineteen officers' chargers and 40 remounts arrived from Durban with Burns on December 1st and were sent to Fort Napier. Eight of the remounts (mostly walers) were absolutely unbroken, and were cast by the

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C.O. Orders came this day for the regiment to march to Estcourt in five marches, starting on the following Monday, but these were countermanded on December 3rd and we were then ordered to train up to Estcourt at once, starting in the evening,

The remounts were brought over from Fort Napier in the morning, and Calvert and 55 N.C.O's. and men

Brigade-Major A. H. Taylor 13th. Hussars.

were detailed to remain at Maritzburg to form a base. The day was very hot, and there was a violent thunderstorm in the evening. The first train left the station for Estcourt at 6.30 p.m. and the last at 3 a.m. the following morning. The regiment arrived at Estcourt during the night, detrained and remained outside the station till daylight. We camped closed to the town.

On December 5th, the following day, we were up

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early and marched to Frere, about 12 miles, arriving there about 9.30 a.m. Frere was a very small place. The first signs of war were here apparent, as the railway bridge just north of the station had been blown up by the Boers. It was just about a mile north of the spruit where the armoured train under Captain Haldane was scuppered on Nov. 13th. Winston Churchill was in

Lieut. The Marquis of Tullibardine D.S.O.
(attached to Regt.)

the train, and both were taken as prisoners of war to Pretoria, from where they escaped later. We were now within striking distance of the enemy. Sir Redvers Buller was here and the whole of Clery's Division. We were the only regular cavalry for the present, but there were Thorneycroft's M.I., Bethune's M.I., the S.A.L.H. and one squadron I.L.H., all under Dundonald. The whole Boer force was back at Colenso. There was a

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big electric search-light which signalled to Ladysmith every night, and Ladysmith signalled back. The Boers had a searchlight between, and tried to obliterate the light—but ineffectually, as their's was the weaker light.

On December 6th the whole regiment started at 3 a.m. to take part in a reconnaisance, under Buller in person, towards Colenso. Several Boers were seen, but they

Captain E. Eckersley R.A.M.C., Lieut. and Quartermaster F. Burch and Major Gladstone A.V.D. at tea.

did not open fire, and we returned to camp about 6.30 p.m. The Boer positions on the hills north of the Tugela looked formidable, and it was diffciult to make out, with the great lack of maps, which side of Hlangwani Hill the Tugela flowed. Maps were scarce, and only C.O.'s possessed one at all.

Four regiments and a battery arrived during Decem-

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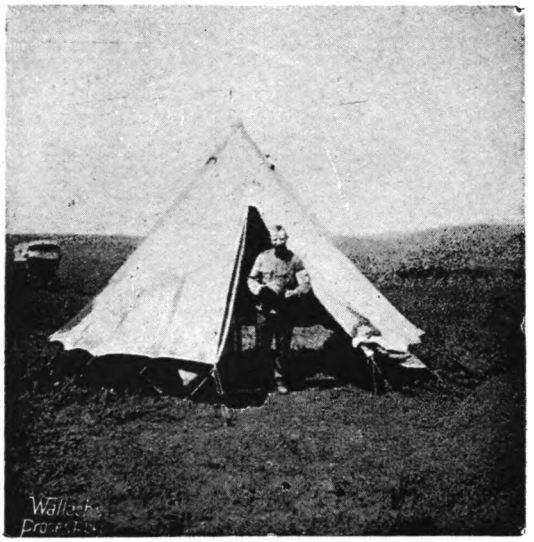
ber 8th, and on the following day the Fusiliers Brigade under General Barton marched into Frere. This made the force up to 16 battalions, five batteries, some Naval Guns, and some 1500 M.I. and Irregulars, besides ourselves.

On December 12th, the 13th Hussars arrived and the



Captain E. Eckersley, R.A.M.C.

next day the Naval Guns and three brigades of Infantry moved to Chieveley, so a general advance seemed imminent.

On December 14th the regiment turned out at 1.30 a.m., and marched at 4 a.m., with the remainder of the force, arriving at Chieveley about midday. Here we were in sight of Colenso and the Boer position, with the Naval 4.7 guns and 12 pounders blazing away. A few parties of Boers were seen during the day, apparently completing their defences. It was impossible to

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judge what artillery they had, as they remained quite silent under the fire of our big guns. Between us and the Boer position was a large glacis-like slope, which did not lend itself to making a reconnaisance, so one was unable to judge the exact position of the enemy, or where his big guns were placed. We heard that Buller meant to attack on the next day. We were within measurable distance of Ladysmith, and could hear their guns firing. On the far side of the Tugela River rose a long line of hills, at the foot of which are numerous kopjes, the whole forming a large semi-circle which was concave as we looked at it. It looked abominable country for cavalry to work in.

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PERIOD II.

December 15th.—The battle of Colenso was fought this day. We do not propose to give a full description of the battle: but Buller decided to make a frontal attack on the great natural fortress of the Colenso mountains, with its great natural "moat," the Tugela, running along the front of it. The 5th (Hart's) Irish Brigade was ordered to Bridle Drift, the 2nd (Hildyard's) Brigade to advance on the iron bridge of Colenso; the 4th (Lyttelton's) in support between the 5th and 2nd Brigades, west of the railway; and the 6th (Barton's) Fusilier Brigade, east of the railway in support of the 2nd Brigade and mounted troops, who were to attack Hlangwane Hill. The 13th Hussars were detailed to guard the right flank.

The battle opened at about 5.45 a.m. with the fire of the Naval guns. It was a lovely morning and the troops in their advance gave one the impression of the commencement of an Aldershot Field-day.

Our task was to guard the left flank, and leaving camp at 3.30 a.m. we went to a point about one mile south of Bridle Drift with Hart's Brigade to our right front. Hart, owing partly to a defective map, and partly to the fault of his kaffir guide, headed his brigade straight into the loop about a mile down stream of Bridle Drift. Here it was possible to cross in the dry season, but the Tugela was now too deep, except at the recognised drifts.

Our patrols moved up the river bank without provoking any fire, but Colonel Burn-Murdoch reported to Hart, by three successive gallopers, that the enemy was in force to his front and left flank. Hart replied that he intended to cross by the drift in front of him, and would ignore the enemy on his left, unless they attacked

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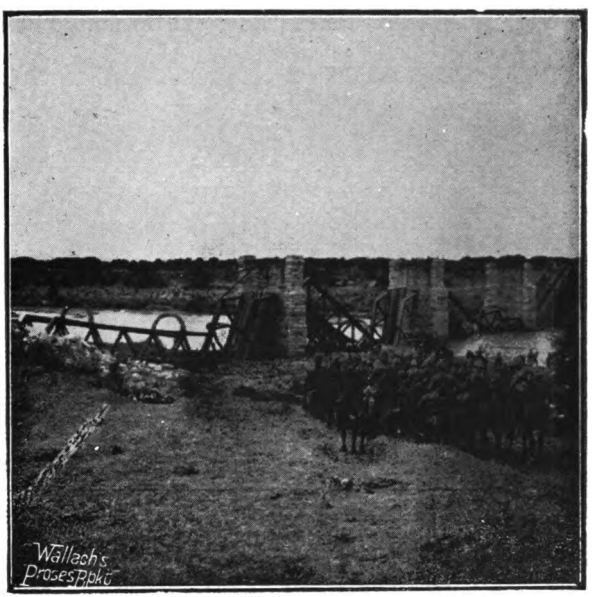
in strength. Hart's Brigade pursued their way well into the loop, getting heavily engaged when close up to the river. When the firing did start, it was terrific; and our first experience of what magazine fire sounded like in war, was a revelation to most of us. Wounded men began coming back, and as we eagerly scanned the



Colenso Railway Bridge.

battlefield, it became apparent that things were not going so well as we could wish. Hart's Brigade had 523 casualties in an hour, and a half.

We moved once during the morning, to a kopje to our left as Boers were suspected of going to try and cross the river and work round the left flank; and a few odd Boers had actually crossed. As a matter of fact, it came out afterwards that Louis Botha had directed the Middelburg and Winburg commandos, who

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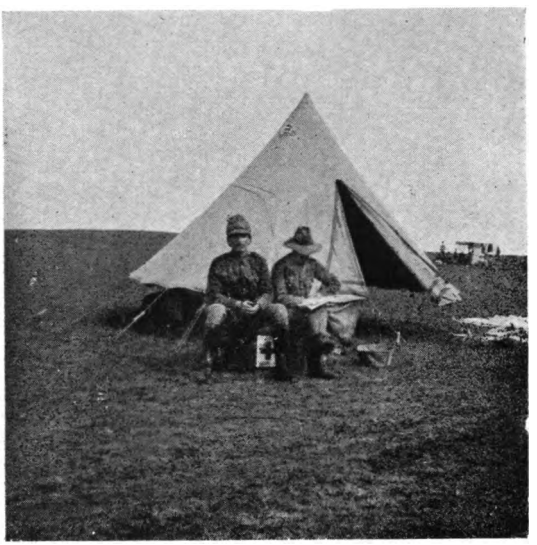
had been to the left of the loop, and had hardly fired a shot all day, to cross higher up and attack the left of the Irish Brigade as it fell back. The Freestaters, who at this period of the war were inclined to resent the control of a Transvaal Commandant, declined to take part in the enterprise.

The history of the rest of the battle is well known; how Long's guns were taken; how the Mounted Brigade



Captain J. W. J. Hardman (on left.)

found the taking of Hlangwane Hill, without support, impossible, having a stronger force under Jan Joubert in front of them; and how Buller's heart failed him when things went somewhat wrong. Buller gave orders for retirement about 11 a.m. and we soon after retired back to our camp of the previous night, with a keen sense of disappointment.

The day had turned unusually hot, and the returning infantry had felt it considerably, but they were not,

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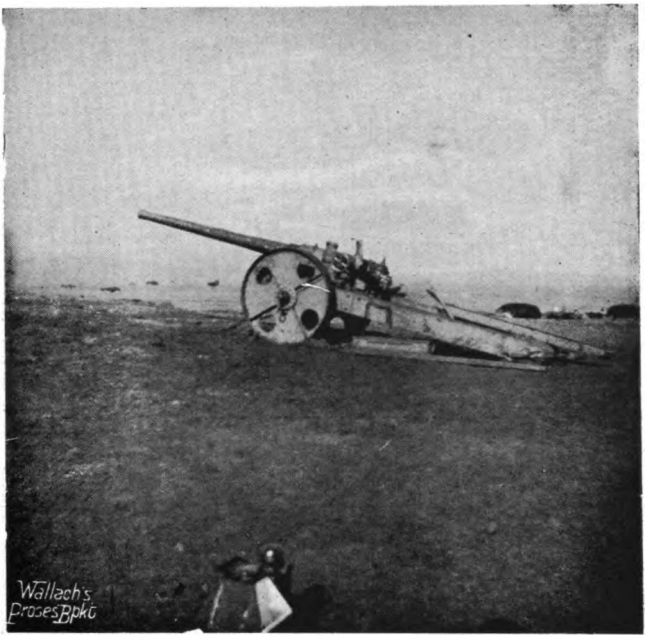
and did not feel themselves, beaten. We got back to camp about 3.30 p.m. and began to get scraps of information of what had been happening in the various parts of the battlefield.

We quote here one paragraph from the "Times History of the War," "The battle of Colenso was not an



4.7 gun. Frere.

unsuccessful attack on the Boer positions behind the Tugela, for the sufficient reason that no attack was ever made. The main Boer defence, the deep and broad Tugela, was never even essayed. Only scattered parties of soldiers here and there reached its banks; there never was any organized attempt to force a passage. The Boers were not pressed, they suffered no losses worth

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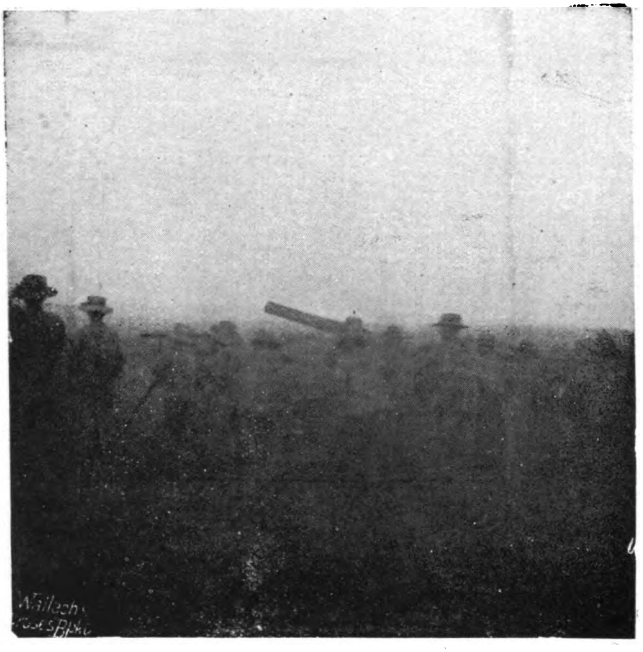
mentioning, they never even found it necessary to move their few and scattered guns. Before any attack could begin, the blunders of two subordinate offieers had caused considerable losses to one of the infantry brigades, and had put two batteries out of action. The attack was immediately abandoned. A few hours later, after



4.7 gun in action. Frere.

a half-hearted and inadequate effort to cover the removal of the batteries, the general abandoned these also and retired. That was all."

On the following day, December 16th, there was an armistice to bury the dead. It was also the anniversary of Dingaan's Day, the Boers national holiday and festi-

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val, and they probably kept it very cheerfully after the events of yesterday.

We got orders during the afternoon to stand to, to be ready to move during the night, as soon as the armistice was at an end. Burns was sent down about 8 p.m.. under the flag of truce, with a letter to the Boer Commandant from Buller. This did not appear a job for a regimental officer. He went down to the Colenso road bridge and handed in his letter, nearly being shot at as he went. The Boers were most offensive, and evidently elated over yesterday's fight.

We left soon after midnight with Hart's and Lyttleton's Brigades, and marched back to Frere. The march was somewhat impeded by a total eclipse of the moon. It was a beautiful night when we started, full moon; but an hour afterwards the eclipse began, and we were in complete darkness. Total eclipses are very interesting in their way, but not on occasions of this sort.

We got back to Frere about dawn after a tedious night, and sent one squadron out on outpost duty.

We spent a quiet day at Frere on the 18th. We got news that Sir Charles Warren's Division (the 5th) was coming up to join the Natal Field Forces. The next day Sir Merrik Burrell, who was unwell, left to take charge of the base at Maritzburg and to relieve Calvert, who came up to join the regiment. Hardman, who had come out in the S. S. Rapidan, joined us. On the 20th the 13th Hussars had a post rushed and lost one killed and two taken prisoners; but they squared up the account on the next day by killing a Boer and wounding five. "B" and "C" squadrons reconnoitred toward Springfield on the Little Tugela.

On Christmas day we joined in a reconnaisance in force to Springfield which was found quite clear of Boers. We started at 4 a.m., returning to camp about 2 p.m., and had an excellent Christmas dinner in the evening with turkeys and plum pudding, washed down

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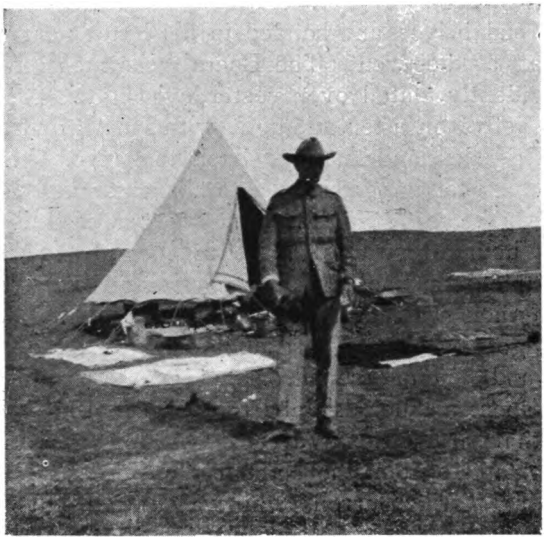
with some Perrier-Jouet, which had just arrived from Maritzburg.

The next few days passed without much incident. On January 1st "A" and "C" squadrons under Lindley reconnoitred towards Weenen on the east; starting at 8 a.m. and travelling over very bad country, they did not get



2nd. Lieut. T. D. Pilkington.

back to camp till 6 p.m. The results were practically nil. On the 6th we got a present of a cow and calf, the latter being converted into veal immediately. We heard very heavy firing in the morning in the Ladysmith direction. A signal message arrived during the day to say that the Boers had made a determined attack on Caesar's Camp (one of the outposts of Ladysmith) at 2.30 a.m. that morning, but had been repulsed. We did not know till later what a very near squeak Ladysmith had had of being taken.

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We had a horrible wet night on January 8th with deluges of rain; and the next day Warren's division began turning up about 2 p.m. having left Escourt at 5 a.m. They had been much impeded by the heavy rain.

Transport and supplies had now been collected at Frere and everything was ready for our next attempt to relieve Ladysmith. We got orders to move at any moment, but owing to the heavy rain, the night march originally intended was given up and it was not until early the next morning, 3 a.m. (January 10th) that we struck our tents, moving off at 4.30 a.m. We covered Hart's Brigade and encamped near Pretorius' farm. The greater part of the baggage stuck, as the spruits were all full and the roads very heavy; our baggage reached us at 6 p.m., having taken eleven hours to do seven miles. We were lucky too, as the waggons kept on arriving till the early hours, in fact when the infantry had reached Pretorius' farm that night, the tail of the transport had scarcely left Frere. It took 36 oxen to drag some of the waggons through the last drift below the camp. Some of the Dundonald's irregulars pushed on to Springfield.

The Forces had been reorganized for this advance. Hildyard's and Hart's Brigades (2nd and 5th) were constituted into the 2nd Division under Clery; the 5th Division was altered by the substitution of Lyttleton's Brigade (4th) for Talbot Coke's (10th), and the latter were included in the Corps troops. The total strength of the force amounted to over 23,000 men of all arms, including 2,000 mounted troops, 7 field batteries, 1 howitzer battery and 10 naval guns. Barton's Brigade with some naval guns was left at Chieveley to cover the lines of communication, and demonstrate against the Colenso position.

The following day we spent at Pretorius' Farm, and patrols reported Boers moving towards Potgieter's drift on the Tugela. The next day we started soon after noon

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for Springfield, arriving there about 5 p.m. We made a start at 4 p.m. on January 16th and trekked on slowly till 10 p.m. when we halted and tried to get a bit of sleep, lying down as we were; but some rain did not make it very pleasant. We were off again at 4 a.m. and got down to within a mile of the Tugela, when we halted and waited, while a pontoon bridge was constructed. One man of the covering party was killed, but otherwise there was no resistance. Only a very few Boers were seen. We eventually crossed by Trichardt's drift, a little below the pontoon bridge, about 4 p.m. The river was very full and running strong. The 13th Hussars, who crossed just in front of us, lost one man drowned and also some horses, Captain Tremayne of that regiment earning the Humane Society Medal, by pluckily saving a man from drowning. We bivouacked on the left bank of the river. Lyttleton's brigade crossed Potgieter's Drift to-day and entrenched themselves on the kopjes just across the river. This caused the Boers to think we meant to cross that drift and to go via Brakfontein; and the whole of the Spion Kop heights might have been ours by pushing up them that evening. As it was, after our slow, ponderous movement to the flank, we now spent some days allowing the Boers to entrench, and turned what should have been a flank attack into a frontal attack against a most formidable position. The advantages of surprise and deception were given away and we allowed the Boers to reinforce and secure their position.

We were up betimes the next morning and most of the day was spent in getting the baggage across—that baggage which seemed more important to our Commander than mobility and the defeat of the enemy. Dundonald and his brigade moved on towards Acton Homes. About 6 p.m we heard that he had had a fight, and "B' squadron was ordered up to reinforce him. They found he had had a small success and killed 12, (including Field

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Cornet Mentz), wounded 10, and captured 23 prisoners. The squadron rejoined the regiment next day.

On the 20th the Infantry began their attack and made good progress up Tabanyama. Dundonald's Irregulars took Bastion Hill in the afternoon by storm, a very good performance; it stood some 800 feet above the plain. They advanced at a gallop to the foot of the hill and then dismounted. We watched them swarm up,

Captain F. C. Poole R.A.

and one man, a sailor, Corporal Tobin, went up ahead of his comrades and waved his hat at the top. The Boers brought a gun into action which killed Major Childe. The appropriate motto of "It is well" is placed on his gravestone.

During the next day fighting went on, uninterruptedly and without any change of position. The Infantry clung to the near crest of Tabanyama. We remained at the bottom towards the right flank, and split up by squa-

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drons, each of which found its own outposts one mile South of Three Tree Hill. We knew at this time little of what was really going on, but it is now plainly set forth in various histories, which are somewhat painful reading.

On the 23rd January, one man of "C" Squadron was killed; we heard that there was to be a night attack on Spion Kop, and at 3 a.m. of the 24th we heard a cheer which showed that the attacking force, which consisted of Woodgate's, Lancashire men and 200 T.M.I., had reached the summit. When we moved off after daylight, we found the top of Spion Kop enveloped in a thick white fog which did not lift till 9 a.m. Then the fighting began. Our troops had not pushed on far enough and the Boers reinforcements climbed the reverse side of the hill unopposed. We were stuck down at the bottom to the S. E. of Spion Kop, powerless to do anything, except look on and await developments. A tremendous artillery and rifle fire was kept up by the Boers all day, and our big guns from Mount Alice, above Potgieter's drift, kept up a good bombardment also.

In the afternoon we were witnesses of a fine piece of work when the 60th Rifles of Lyttleton's Brigade attacked the Twin Peaks of Spion Kop, commencing the ascent about 2 p.m. It was gallantly and finely executed in spite of messages to try and stop them, which arrived when they had well started. Unfortunately Buller at last had them recalled and they left the summit at 6 p.m. having lost 3 officers and 17 men killed, and 4 officers and 65 men wounded. We bivouacked close to the river.

The next morning we were doomed to an unpleasant surprise, in finding that we had evacuated Spion Kop and that our second try at the relief of Ladysmith had failed. We saw our troops near the bottom and Boers on the top. During the morning Colonel Burn-Murdoch

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got verbal orders by a galloper to reconnoitre Spion Kop to ascertain whether the Boers had re-occupied the hill or not. Our Commanding Officer rightly declined to execute this order and take the regiment up the mountain, as it might be called, in preference to a hill. He took Hamilton-Russell, his orderly Holdsworth, and called for two volunteers, saying that he would reconnoitre it with these. Luckily for this party, before they reached the summit, they met some stretcher bearers bringing down wounded, who told them that the top of the hill was swarming with Boers: so their object was achieved. We did not feel in the best of spirits, but the whole force was ready for another attempt at once and determined to relieve Ladysmith at any cost.

The whole history of the last few days is not very instructive reading, now that all the details are plainly set forth. It is to be hoped, that one of the most extraordinary features of this period, namely, the delegation of command by a General Officer Commanding to an inferior, while he himself looked on, when close at hand, as a disinterested critic of the operations, will never again find a parallel in the future history of the British Army.

On January 26th we received orders to return across the Tugela. Soon after we started, it came on to rain in torrents. On crossing the drift, we were not allowed to put on our cloaks, as the river was still very high and the drift consequently dangerous, and if any man was swept away in a cloak, he would not stand much chance. The whole regiment got across before dark without mishap, and we bivouacked on a small kopje on the right bank, covering the crossing. It poured with rain the whole night and it was cold and unpleasant. The rest of the army and baggage crossed by the pontoons during the night.

A beautiful morning dawned after the wet and uncomfortable night, and we soon dried after our soaking.

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The whole of the force got over soon after daylight—a good performance; and we moved off towards Mount Alice. Makins was sent up to the top of Spion Kop under a flag of truce, with a letter to Louis Botha, respecting the burial of our dead. He took a Church of England and a Roman Catholic chaplain and a burial party followed. On reaching the top a Boer presented a rifle at the party and our enemies were distinctly discourteous. The sight at the top can be left to the imagination, as the bodies had been lying since the 24th, exposed to the South African sun, rain, and vultures. It was a sickening sight. There was very little time as the party had to leave at 6 p.m. and the burying party took a long time getting up; but two long trenches were hastily dug, some intrenchments coming in useful. The bodies were widely scattered and some probably remained unburied for a time. The losses on Spion Kop itself during the day of the fight out of a total of 4,500 men (including the unengaged reserve) were as follows: 68 officers and 976 men killed, wounded and missing, or roughly 23 per cent. There was a little friction between the padres as to who was to read the service first, as most of the men were Church of England; but then the R. C. chaplain was senior; the matter was amicably settled as there were two trenches. The difficulty at the end was to find Warren, to whom the answer was to be given; for it was dark before the party had crossed the Tugela. Any officer who had been sent on a message to him during these operations will remember the difficulty. However, he was eventually discovered towards midnight.

The next day we moved to Spearman Hill and remained quiet there for a bit, only sending out patrols. We made a reconnaisance in force to Honger's Poort on the 30th but saw nothing.

On February 2nd Colonel Burn-Murdoch was made Brigadier of the 1st Cavalry Brigade consisting of our-

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selves, 13th Hussars, 14th Hussars (two squadrons of this regiment had just arrived, the other squadron being round in Cape Colony), and "A" Battery R.H.A. Burn-Murdoch appointed Graham (5th Lancers) Brigade-Major, Taylor (13th Hussars) Staff-Officer "B," and Tullibardine A.D.C.

Buller had now been evolving a new scheme to penetrate the Boers line of defence and force the line of the Tugela. He was himself very sanguine of success now, and told all the troops on church parade that he had found the "Key to Ladysmith," and that we should be there within a week. On the 3rd Buller unfolded his plan and issued his orders for the attack on Vaalkrantz, which (to put it shortly) was to make a feint on the Brakfontein position and then to attack Vaalkrantz,—our brigade was, when feasible, to cross the Tugela, to skirt Vaalkrantz, to advance up the defile between it and Doornkloof into the open plain which led to Ladysmith, and to act as circumstances presented themselves.

On February 5th we were up at 3.30 a.m. for the attack on Vaalkrantz, full of hope that at last we were going to relieve Ladysmith. The battle began with a feint by Wynne's Brigade on the Brakfontein position, and we were treated to a fine sight. The Brigade emerged from the kopjes at 6 a.m. and advanced under cover of six Field Batteries over the level plain which extended for some two miles up to Brakfontein, over which the guns made good practice, and from which the Boer Commandoes awaited the attack in silence. It was not until 11.45 a.m. when our infantry had got to within about 1,000 yards of the trenches that three Boer guns and a pom-pom began to shell our batteries on the plain. Thereupon the ranks halted and lay down, and for the next hour and a half were heavily, but harmlessly shelled by the Boers. It was a grand sight to see our guns in action with shells bursting all round

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them; sometimes a shell burst with a cloud of dust, and seemed to annihilate a gun; but as soon as the dust cleared, the gun began shooting again as though nothing had happened.

At about 12.30 p.m. the pontoon bridge was completed for the real attack on Vaalkrantz and the batteries limbering up in succession, moved off, the last battery to move having all the Boer guns concentrated on it; but although it seemed to be being blown to pieces, it was practically unharmed. At 1.30 p.m. Wynne, considering his mission accomplished, gave the word to retire. Then the Boers began to fire, and from all along the Brakfontein position came an immense discharge of magazine fire. Wynne's men were widely extended and they soon were out of effective range, but it was marvellous to see the bullets striking the ground like a hail storm all amongst the men, without doing much harm. The Infantry had only one man killed and 27 wounded; the Artillery, two Officers and 8 men wounded.

There was some delay between the feint and the real attack, which was to be carried out by three brigades (those of Lyttleton 4th, Hildyard 2nd, and Hart 5th). This took away the value of the feint, and it was not till 2 p.m., although No. 3 Pontoon Bridge, 1,500 yards below Munger's Drift, had been completed at about 11.15 p.m., that Lyttleton's Brigade went down to the bridge.

The regiment was all this time just below and south of Swartzkop, where we remained till the evening of the 7th; only slightly altering our position. At 4 p.m. Vaalkrantz was captured, but the troops could get no further, and now difficulties beset them; and so the situation rested for the night. During the next day our troops could not get forward to hill 360 which lay just beyond Vaalkrantz; it was found impracticable to get any guns on to Vaalkrantz, and the Boers were in force all round. Again the fact of attacking with a small front upon an isolated point was exemplified as

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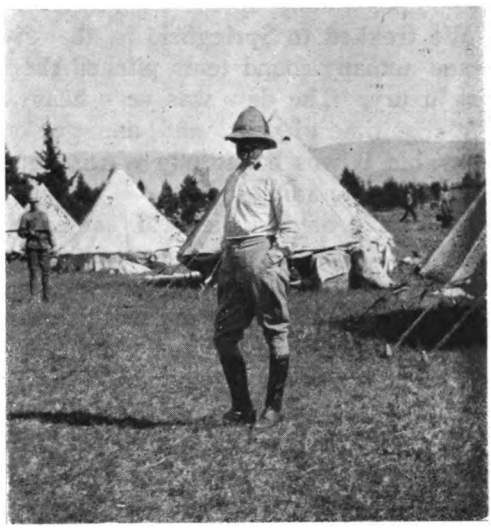
at Spionkop, and our men were subjected to a heavy concentrated fire. The day wore on, with a counter attack by the Boers in the afternoon. During the morning the Boers started to shell us vigorously from a "Long Tom" on the top of Doornkop. Their range was very good, but as usual their shells were bad, and did us no damage; however, we shifted a little to the west to escape them. One shell went right into the middle of



Brig. Gen. J. F. Burn-Murdoch.

a squadron of the 13th Hussars, next to us, but failed to do any damage. One of our 4.7 guns on Swartz Kop replied and an immense column of smoke ascended, which was evidently caused by the exploding of a magazine.

The following day opened with the same situation, and after a personal reconnaissance, Buller called his generals together at 4 p.m. and announced his intention of abandoning the present attempt of trying to relieve Ladysmith at this point, and so ended our third at-

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tempt at the relief, which was acutely disappointing, after being told that the "key to Ladysmith" had been found in Vaalkrantz.

The orders were given to retire at 5.45 p.m. and we received them just as we were cooking our evening meal. We retired in the dark, not feeling very happy.

For the next three days we remained at Spearmans and did nothing, with the exception of one squadron finding the outposts daily up the river towards Schoongezicht. We trekked to Springfield in the evening of the 10th, and actually found tents pitched there, which was a real luxury. The dew was very heavy at night in Natal at that time of year, and one got very wet sleeping out, but it was beautifully warm, and we were very lucky to get no rain.

We spent a quiet day on the 11th, one squadron providing the outposts to the north across the river. The main army having moved off to Chieveley, Burn Murdoch was left in command. He had besides the Cavalry Brigade, some of the York and Lancasters, the Durban Light Infantry and a naval 12 pounder.

The next day "C" Squadron started off on outpost duty just before daybreak. As soon as they had crossed the Little Tugela, they split up, each party going off to their different posts, Hardman in the centre pushing on to a high hill called Rustenburg. It appeared that Botha was making a reconnaissance this morning and had just reached the top of the hill from the other side before our men; and laying up, he opened a heavy fire on them as they came up. The Boers held the position and outnumbered us, so there was nothing to do but retire. We lost one man killed, five wounded, and eight taken prisoners, amongst the latter being Pilkington, who stayed behind to look after Hamilton-Russell, who had been shot in two places, through the thigh and below the knee. We also lost eight horses. Hardman, who behaved very gallantly, in taking his trumpter out

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of action on his own horse, was unhurt. Reinforcements were sent out immediately, and the Boers retired, taking with them the prisoners, who were treated well.

Early next morning a "C" Squadron man, named Patient, who was returned as missing on the previous day, was discovered by "A" Squadron as they were going out on outposts. He had lain up on the hill all day after the action, and during the night had crawled back, almost 7 miles towards camp. He had been shot through the stomach, low down, but seemed to be doing fairly well. Mears of "C" Squadron, who was wounded, being shot through the head, died on his way into Frere. We got a wire this day to say that Lord Roberts had crossed into the Orange Free State.

On February 14th "B" Squadron were on outposts towards Honger's Poort and saw a few Boers, and also got reports of a strong party on the hills; these retired before their advanced party, but they kept on the move all day, so the squadron was ordered to remain out all night. A very disturbed night ensued, however; the wagons with food and grain arrived very late, and the mosquitoes were awful. One man let off his rifle in the small hours at something or other, and it was extraordinary how smartly every one was ready and alert with his rifle along our position for defence; however, nothing ensued. We heard heavy firing towards Colenso, telling us that the fourth attempt at the relief had begun.

On the 20th inst. there was a reconnaissance in force to Spearmans, but there was not a sign of a Boer on our side of the Tugela. We could still hear the sound of fighting going on at Colenso.

The next day we moved off at 3 a.m. for Chieveley, which we reached about 12.30 p.m. Heavy fighting was going on by Colenso, and we learnt that things were going on slowly but surely. We got orders at about 10.30 p.m. to move the following morning. We started

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early on the 2nd inst., marched down to the west side of Hlangwane and remained there all day, bivouacking there for the night.

On February 23rd we moved off at 5 a.m. and crossing the Tugela by the pontoon, halted at Fort Wylie, and bivouacked there for the night. It was a dreadful country for cavalry to operate in, and we couldn't do much. We did not know the exact state of affairs to our front. Lindley went home invalided this day.

The next day news reached us that Lord Roberts had cornered Cronje together with 8,000 men, and that he (Cronje) had surrendered himself with the whole lot. This was great news indeed, and everybody felt the better for it. We were back across the Tugela in the afternoon by the old road drift; but the transport, having to go all round by the pontoon, did not reach us until 12.30 p.m. We bivouacked clear of the village and to the west.

On the following day, February 25th, we moved off early in the morning to Hussar Hill, where we found traces of the recent fighting. We passed some graves of the "Queen's" which had proved but shallow coverings for the poor bodies beneath, and had been washed by the rains. The protruding limbs were rather gruesome to look upon. We bivouacked on Hussar Hill with the usual outposts. There was an armistice this day to bury the dead. Very heavy firing was heard about 10 p.m. across the river from Colenso. A patrol of one officer and four men was sent out at 2 p.m. the next morning to find out the cause, and returning at 5.30 a.m. reported that it was a false alarm.

We moved back to Colenso during the afternoon, and back to Chieveley in the evening to reinforce the troops there, in case the Boers attempted to cut our lines of communication. It rained in torrents and we were completely flooded out. We crossed the spot where Long's batteries were wiped out, and the horses were

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still lying there with the harness on their carcases. Here we heard that the report of Cronje's surrender was untrue.

Tuesday, February 27th, Majuba Day, saw us ordered back to Colenso, and we reached the west side of Hlangwane about noon. We could see the attack progressing all day, culminating in a fine infantry charge with the bayonet along Railway Hill in the evening. Harts and Railway hills were carried with the bayonet, Pieters was occupied at 7 p.m., and the road to Ladysmith was at last open. The whole of the Artillery, about 90 guns, played a very important part in the day's fighting, the chief objective being, apparently, Pieter's Hill; the big guns at Chieveley searched out the kloofs on Doornkloof, and the whole effect was very fine.

We pushed on a bit before dark, and bivouacked just north of Hlangwane. We met Buller, who said that the opposition was broken and that Ladysmith was practically relieved. We had a large party of prisoners bivouacked next us under guard which was a pleasing sight! To complete this eventful anniversary of Majuba, we heard that Cronje and his commando had really surrendered.

"Thus ended the fighting of February 27th and with it the campaign of the Tugela. The battle of Pieter's Hill was a successful finale to a long series of reverses, and it was so, simply because for the first time in the whole history of that campaign, with the solitary exception of Monte Christo, the army had been allowed to develope a substantial part of its fighting strength; brigadiers were given the opportunity—which they never had before—for the skilful handling of their brigades. Up to this, the history of the Tugela campaign had been the record of the failure of slow and hesitating movements, of small forces operating unsupported on narrow parts. At last the obvious remedy was tried. The attempt was made to work at least half the troops

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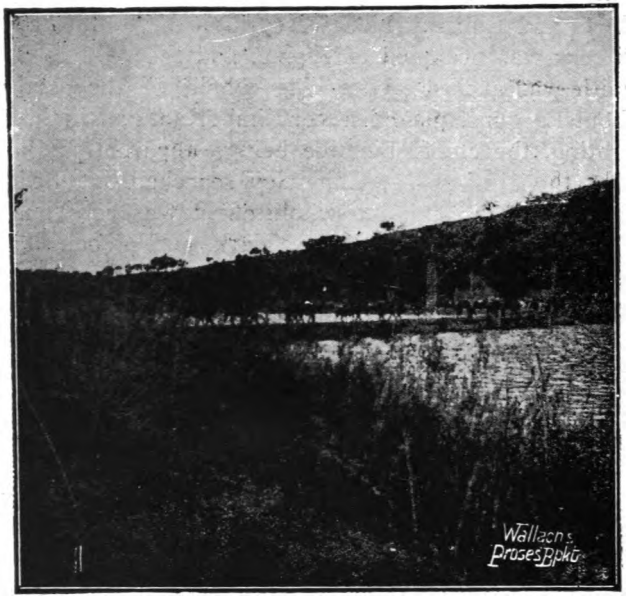
and all the guns in combination. The result was instantaneous, overwhelming and comparatively easily obtained. The victory took six hours to accomplish; it cost under 500 casualties, and it rolled the Boers back in utter confusion."*

The next morning—Wednesday, February 28th—we moved off early and once more crossed the Tugela by



Tugela River. (Showing pontoon).

the pontoon below the falls. We passed by some stretchers carrying wounded men back, of our own forces and those of the Boers; we also passed some of our dead collected ready for burial. We went over Railway Hill, the scene of the fighting of the previous day. There were plenty of examples of the effect of the artillery fire, rocks and trees smashed, and the earth

*"Times" History of the War.

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ploughed up in all directions; and from what we saw in the trenches, it seemed that the Boers must have lost heavily. We were told on reliable authority that the bodies of two women had been found amongst the dead. The trenches were full of ammunition of all sorts, including two or three patterns of expanding and soft-nosed bullets.

Tugela River (below Colenso).

We halted till about 1 p.m. when Buller allowed our Brigade to move out on to the plain to the north-east. Dundonald had meanwhile passed through our Infantry and had met with a small Boer rear-guard It may well be asked why the Cavalry and Mounted Brigades were not launched in pursuit now that the Boers were in full retreat, so as to gain the fruits of victory.

The "Times" says: "Never, perhaps, has a general

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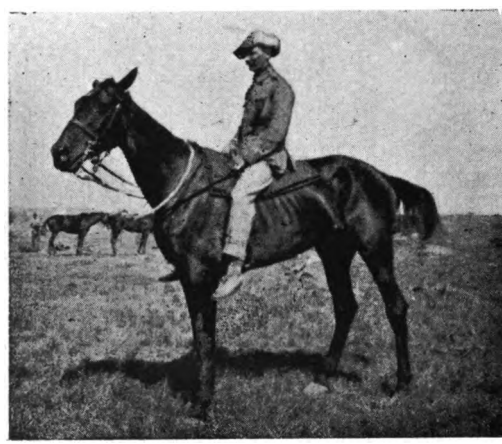
enjoyed such an opportunity for destroying a beaten and demoralized enemy; but Buller had not the slightest intention of pursuing."

In reference to this we may quote from the Official History of the War: "At 1 p.m. Burn-Murdoch, in answer to his repeated requests to be allowed to go on, was told to advance towards the right front. Before he had reached the railway line south of Pieter's Station, Weldon met him, and informed him that Dundonald was



Lieut. The Lord Charles Fitzmaurice.

asking for help in his engagement at Davel's Spruit. Burn-Murdoch accordingly turned westward, and after remaining some time in support of the 2nd Mounted Brigade (Dundonald) until the Boers were driven away (largely by machine gun fire) and their laager captured, he turned eastward towards the Klip River. On nearing the high ground about Nelthorpe, the Cavalry Brigade (Burn-Murdoch) found itself in the presence of another portion of the enemy's rear-guard, which covered the operations of burghers, busily passing their guns and

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wagons down the eastern side of Umbulwana. Reports had been sent by General Barton and Colonel Sandbach describing the retreat and movements of the Boers, and indicating the spots from which guns could usefully be employed against them. Hardly any use was made of such of the Artillery as had been brought across the river; and the Naval 12-pounders on Clump Hill having opening fire on their own initiative against the burghers, who covered the dismantling of the works on Umbulwana, were silenced by a Staff Officer. The Boer rear-guard opened heavy musketry fire upon the leading squadrons of the 13th and 14th Hussars from both sides of the river, and guns played upon them from the south-eastern end of Umbulwana. Though checked, Burn-Murdoch held his ground, and occupied a farm which overlooked the bridge thrown over the Klip River by the Boers. At night-fall, after he had off-saddled and watered his horses, he sent to report to Sir Redvers that he proposed to stay the night on the farm, and pursue the enemy at dawn."

"Throughout the 28th the Commander-in-Chief had been considering the question whether he should launch his mounted troops in pursuit of the burghers who had retired before him during the night of the 27th—28th or should devote his whole energies to passing into Ladysmith the long column of supply wagons which stood on the right bank laden with food for White's starving soldiery. He decided in favour of the food. After the capture by the Infantry of Hart's, Kitchener's and Pieter's Hills, he deemed it impossible to send forward his mounted troops. Thus the Boers gained a long start in their retreat. This start had been greatly increased by the temporary breakdown of the pontoon bridge. He had had large personal experience of Boers in rear-guard fighthing, when he had burghers with him in the war against the Zulus. To pursue them now without artillery seemed to him hopeless. If he was to

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get food into Ladysmith at once he could not use adequate artillery in the pursuit, for nearly all his guns were on the right bank of the Tugela, massed around the plateau of Naval Hill. These would have to be lowered down the steep bank of the river, passed over the pontoon bridge, and hauled up the steeper slopes on the left hank, an operation which, as he estimated, must take the drivers and teams of each gun or wagon three-quarters of an hour to accomplish. But when the guns had reached the left bank the difficulties would not be over, for the Klip River, as well as the Tugela, was in flood, and therefore impassable except by the Boer bridge, south of Umbulwana. As he did not know whether the Boers had not destroyed this means of passage, he had to take into his calculations the possibility of being himself obliged to bridge the Klip, in order to attack Umbulwana, the occupation of which he considered necessary to protect the right of his advance. Now he had but one pontoon bridge, which was at present employed on the Tugela below Naval Hill. If he dismantled this, to use it at the Klip River, he cut off the only means by which the supply wagons could cross the stream, for he knew that Colonel Rawson's restoration of the Colenso road bridge could not be finished for two or three days. Therefore he replied to Burn-Murdoch's message with an order to fall back behind the line occupied by the infantry since the end of the battle of the 27th. Burn-Murdoch therefore left a detached post to hold the bridge, and fell back behind the infantry outposts south-west of Pieter's Station."

This narrative has been quoted as it deals fully and officially with the facts of the situation; it completely whitewashes our brigadier from the charge of not taking the bit in his teeth and pursuing, and it tries to place Buller's action in its most favourable light. Our brigadier could not possibly do anything but obey the orders of his chief, who was practically at his side. It is to be

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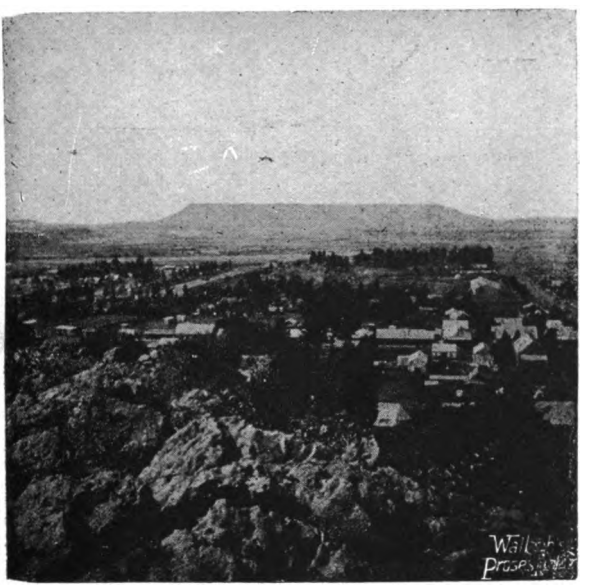
hoped that no excuse, as quoted above will have to be made in the future for a British General, who gets such a chance as Buller had, but that every man will be utilized, whether there are guns handy or not, whether there is a chance of a flooded river and a broken bridge or not, to gain the greatest success from a victory, and not merely reap barren results. Surely the food for



Umbulwana Hill.

Ladysmith could have automatically moved into the town under the Supply Officers, behind a victorious army pursuing a demoralized enemy.

Under cover of Burn-Murdoch's movement to the eastward, Dundonald had resumed his advance towards Ladysmith, the Composite regiment led by Captain H. Gough, 16th Lancers, scouted to the front, followed by the remainder of the brigade. It was late before he

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found his way clear into Ladysmith; Gough pushed on in to the town, followed by Dundonald while the remainder of the brigade were sent back some distance for the night.

The next day we moved out again towards Ladysmith and our duty was to guard the right front, flank and rear of the forces. We crossed the Klip River by the

Town Hall. Ladysmith. (Note shell-hole in clock tower).

Boer bridge and arrived at the shoulder of Umbulwana at 11.30 a.m. and looked down into Intombi Hospital and towards Ladysmith. "Burn-Murdoch then sent to ask to be liberated from his clearly detailed employment of guarding the right flank, right front and rear of the infantry, and to be allowed to go on, but Sir Redvers refused, and ordered the cavalry back to Nelthorpe."

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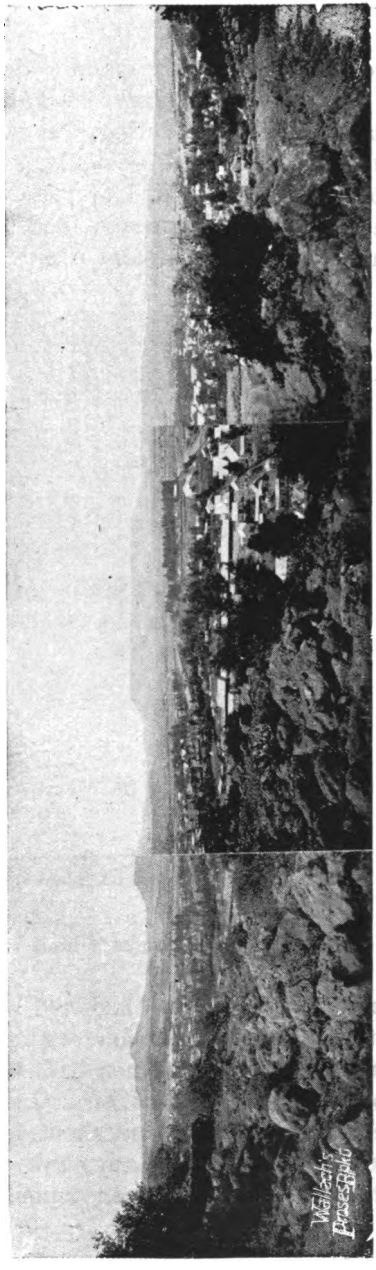
Another point related in the Official History shows how set Buller was against any pursuit. A squadron of the 13th Hussars under Major Williams had scouted far to the front on this morning; it got beyond recall and reached Ladysmith at 7 a.m. He saw Sir George White and asked to go out with a small column starting from Ladysmith. White asked Williams if Buller would have any objections and Williams reassured him. However, Buller riding into Ladysmith met Williams whom he ordered to halt and return; he told him that he did not wish for any pursuit of the enemy, but gave Williams leave, while resting his horses, to ride on to the front where Knox's troops were in action. He and one or two other officers saw the Boers place a gun on a train and blow up a culvert behind them. Knox's troops were too



Panorama of Ladysmith.

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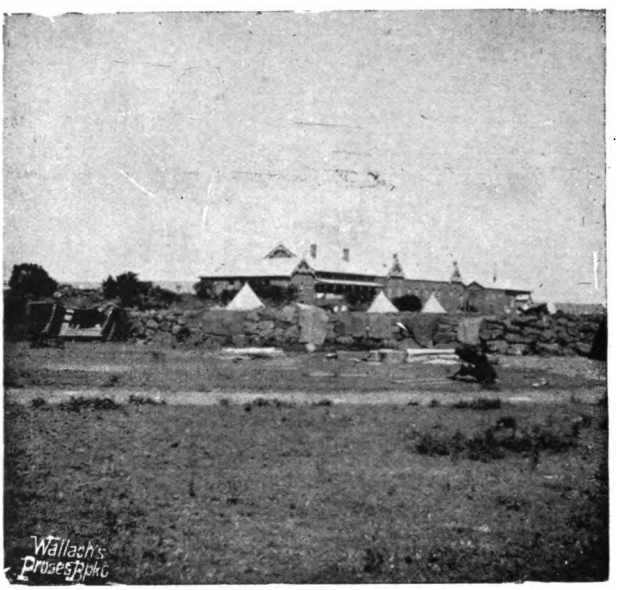
weak from the exhaustion of the siege to do anything.

We got to the place where the Krugersdorp Commando had been during the siege and went through their laager, where everything had been left in utter confusion. Every kind of possession was left lying about in the shape of clothing, food, books, etc.; one curious thing was a lady's satin evening shoe, which seemed to



Convent Ladysmith.
(Sir Georges Whites Headquarters.)

show that the Boers had had a certain amount of social intercourse with the fair sex; in fact there seemed to have been many women with them in the laager. We collected plenty of coffee and sugar for the men before returning to Nelthorpe about 1 p.m. Makins and Tullibardine rode into Ladysmith to see their respective brothers who had been amongst the besieged. They

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took many good things, such as a bottle of champagne, which had been kept for the event, jam, tobacco, etc., Fitzmaurice also rode in to see a young cousin in the Naval Brigade. Luckily all were found well, and not sorry that the siege had come to an end.

The regiment remained encamped at Nelthorpe on Friday, March 2nd, while preparations were made for the triumphal entry of the Natal Field Force into Ladysmith; and on the following day the entry took place. The streets were lined by all those of the garrison who were considered strong enough to stand up, and very thin and ill some of them looked, and many a man had to fall out. We ourselves marched into Ladysmith via Devon Post at the extreme end of Helpmakaar Ridge, and the men left on outposts there certainly looked very siege-worn, and it was somewhat pitiful to see them scrambling for biscuits and anything our men could spare them in the shape of tobacco. There was no doubt that the siege had been a very genuine one and that the garrison was nearly at the end of its tether—very different to the sieges of Mafeking and Kimberley.

We marched straight through the town, passed the Town Hall, with the shell-hole through its clock-tower, which has been carefully preserved in that condition up to date. We continued our march to Tintown, the old cantonment of Ladysmith before the war, and were quartered there. This was a great mistake, as if we had been sent further out on to the clean veldt, we should no doubt have saved a good many cases of enteric fever. Even in peace time, Ladysmith had been well known for this scourge, and its ravages during and after the siege were severe.

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PERIOD III.

We remained at Tintown, Ladysmith, till March 6th, when the 13th Hussars and ourselves moved out towards Elandslaagte, following the line of the railway. The road was strewn with broken-down wagons, which the Boers had abandoned in their flight. All culverts and bridges on the railway had been destroyed. On the 8th, Wigan, 13th Hussars, whilst out on patrol near Meran, was shot in the shoulder, owing to the treachery of a farmer: one of his patrol was killed and another wounded. A patrol of ours saw a party of Boers towards One Tree Hill in the Biggarsberg. We camped near Modderspruit and had a very wet night, being quite flooded out.

The next day we moved our camp about one-and-a-half miles north-east of Elandslaagte Station, just short of Sunday's River. Leighton had his horse shot in the quarters, whilst out on patrol and several Boers were seen in the Biggarsberg. We now put out a line of outposts daily along and just across the Sunday's River, the right flank as far as the Ladysmith-Builth road and the left on the Ladysmith-Newcastle road at Mitchell-Innes' farm.

Lyttleton's and Hildyard's brigades arrived—all under the former as Clery was sick. There was a certain amount of polo, on private and ammunition ponies, two or three days a week.

There then ensued a long period of inaction. The P.M.O. had reported to Buller, that a month must elapse before the Ladysmith garrison would be fit for service and the troops were sent south to recuperate. Only 200 useless horses remained for the Ladysmith Cavalry

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Brigade. There were 2,000 sick in Intombi Hospital, and the railway had to be repaired.

On the 13th we heard that Lord Roberts had got into Bloemfontein. "A" Squadron going out to escort a staff officer on the look-out for a new camping ground, got engaged with a party of Boers and lost one man (Thompson) killed. "C" Squadron, who were on the right up the Waschbank Valley, saw about 300 Boers trekking by Waschbank Station, evidently en route to Glencoe. An ambulance with a doctor, and a few men, under Sergts. Briggs and Scott, which went out to bury Thomson, was detained all night at Wessels Nek Station by a party of 30 Boers, who were scouts and mostly foreigners. They behaved very well and shared what food they had with our people. It appeared from their conversation that they were still being fed with wonderful lies as regards our large losses and their small ones. (Sergt. Scott can give quite a racy account of their evening at Wessels Nek Station, where it appears high revelry was held during the whole of the night).

On the 31st we heard that old General Joubert was dead, which caused some regret, as he was a very superior class of Boer. The 14th Hussars left Natal during the month and the 5th Dragoon Guards joined our brigade.

The squadrons used to go out daily from camp, in turn, on outpost duty, sending patrols out beyond the river, when parties of Boers used to try to lie up for them, and the work was not much calculated to improve the desired offensive spirit of cavalry.

On April 9nd the Sunday's River bridge was ready for traffic, and on the 7th we got orders to move back to Ladysmith to relieve Dundonald's Brigade, which came up to Elandslaagte in our place. We marched back on the 8th and camped at Star Hill. The brigade now took up a line of outposts thrown out the west towards the Drakensberg, with headquarters at Niblick

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Hill, where we moved on the 10th. Each regiment had a squadron out—the 5th Dragoon Guards' squadron on the right at Smith's Crossing on the Ladysmith-Harrismith railway. Our squadron was in the centre at Blauwbank, and the 13th Hussars' squadron on the left, near Spion Kop. Everything was ready for the Boers, who would not come, but on the 17th the squadron at Blauwbank engaged a party of 30 Boers, who retired towards the Drakensberg.

No sooner had we left Sunday's River, than on the 10th the Boers came down from the Biggarsberg and opened fire with three guns at a range of 5,000 yds and engaged the piquets along the river. "The attack, which was directed by General Botha in person, had been carefully prepared in the full hopes of luring Sir Redvers Buller into giving battle in the open." But Buller was not to be drawn and the camp was moved back behind the kopjes, where the action on October 21st, 1899, had been fought.

We were troubled with horse-sickness a good deal at this period and elaborate precautions were taken, both in tarring the nosebags, which are left on all night, and injecting an astringent into the windpipes of those horses which take the disease. The former precaution was no doubt efficacious, but the latter remedy seemed useless.

The regiment remained doing this outpost duty until May 23rd, when we were ordered to march to Sunday's River, following in the wake of Buller. Buller had advanced from Sunday's River on May 11th, and having turned the Biggarsberg by the east near Helpmakaar, had reached Newcastle on the 19th.

Crossing Sunday's River at Innes' farm, we marched through the Biggarsberg via the Ladysmith-Newcastle road and reached Dannhauser on the 25th. The following day we marched to Dundee, in order to join the 5th Dragoon Guards, and B.M.I., to go into Zululand.

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However, the next day again we returned to Dannhauser.

Then we moved off to De Waal's farm, forming a flank guard to Wynne's brigade, moving east to make good the New Republic. It was bitterly cold with frost at night. We marched back to Dannhauser, only again to be sent to De Waal's farm.

All this movement and counter-movement had started owing to a reverse to the B.M.I. near Vryheid, when a company was ambushed and lost heavily. Besides the enemy at Vryheid there was at this time a force of some 1,500 at Doornberg, just east of De Jager's Drift, and these demonstrated strongly from time to time against Buller's right rear. "So unsafe indeed, appeared this flank, that on May 7th Sir Redvers Buller sent two columns across the Buffalo. One consisting of the 11th (Wynne) Brigade, with two 4.7 and four 12 pounder naval guns, and the S.A.L.H., all under Hildyard, crossed by Wool's Drift, marched on the 29th, and two days later received the surrender of that town. The other column, 18th Hussars, two batteries R.F.A., a Howitzer battery, two 12 pounder guns R.G.A., one Vickers-Maxim and 8th Infantry Brigade — under Lyttleton — crossed the river by Inchanga Drift, eighteen miles south-east of Wool's Drift, and entering Transvaal soil, supported Hildyard, whilst the 1st Cavalry Brigade from both banks of the river watched all drifts to the south."

Thus on June 1st we made a reconnaissance across De Jager's Drift on the Buffalo River to the Doornberg, the 5th Dragoon Guards operating on our right. "The effect of these diversions was that the enemy, some 2,000 in number, under General Grobbelaar of Vryheid, evacuated the Doornberg, and retired behind Utrecht; the pressure on the outposts and the danger to the nearly-repaired railway ceasing with their withdrawal." We returned to Dannhauser on June 2nd.

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During June, 2nd Lieuts. Lambert, Gore, Egerton and Ripley joined, and we also got the news of Captain Julian Hardman's death at Pinetown Hospital, from enteric fever; he was a great loss to the Regiment.

On June 4th we marched to Ingagane, and from that place by a system of detached troops, guarded Newcastle and the lines of communication by watching the drifts across the Buffalo River on the east, and the passes over the Drakensberg on the west. We were

Tendega Farm.

assisted in this work by the 13th Hussars in and above Newcastle, and the 5th D.G.'s north of them again. "C" Squadron was sent forward to Rooi Pynt, a nek on the road about halfway between Ingagane and Newcastle, detaching troops to Drycut and Duckponds farms to watch and patrol the Buffalo Flats. Another troop from "A" Squadron was detached to Tendega farm for the same purpose, acting on the right of "C" Squadron, and patrols were sent westward to watch the Drakensberg.

On July 2nd the regiment took part in a reconnais-

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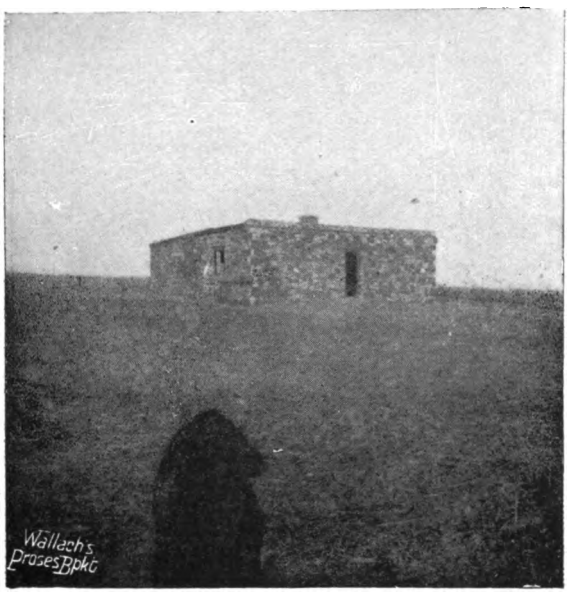
sance in force towards Utrecht, to locate the number of Boers at that place, and Corporal Garrard was caught, and taken prisoner while on patrol.

On July 11th, 2nd Lieut. Douglas Pilkington was killed at Zilikats Nek, a few miles west of Pretoria in the Magaliesberg, while attached to a squadron of Greys which was holding the nek. He had been released from



Drycut Farm.

Pretoria together with the other prisoners of war, and pending his being able to rejoin, had been attached to the Scots Greys.

On July 15th, at Rooi Pynt there was a thick fog which suddenly lifted while the men were on church parade, and a Boer was seen almost in camp. He had evidently lost his way in the fog, while trying to pass

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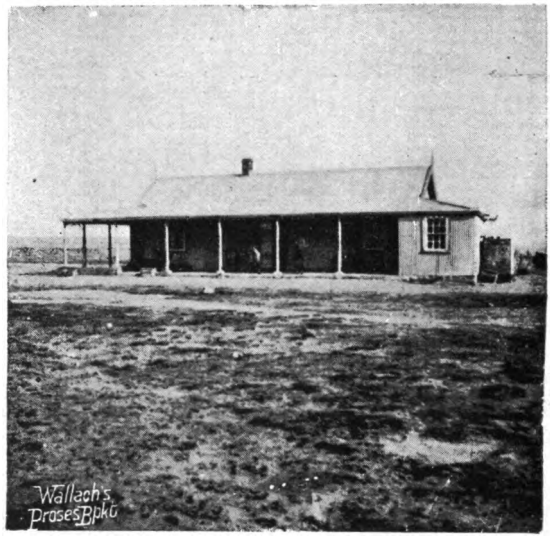
from the Drakensberg to the Buffalo. The inlying piquet was turned out and he was hunted back to the Drakenberg, but he was lost owing to having got too much of a start. He dropped his hat, in which was inscribed the name of Opperman.

On August 1st we heard that Prinsloo and his men had surrendered, which was cheering. We suffered very



Duckponds Farm.

much about this period from a scout, attached to the regiment, who was by way of working the Intelligence Department. His imagination was colossal and as a liar he proved himself unsurpassed, but it naturally took a little time to find out what a humbug he was. In the meantime, we suffered many things owing to his alarmist reports, but our Intelligence Officer at Newcastle (to whom he was a thorn in the flesh) sized him and his reports up, accurately in the end, and he was rele-

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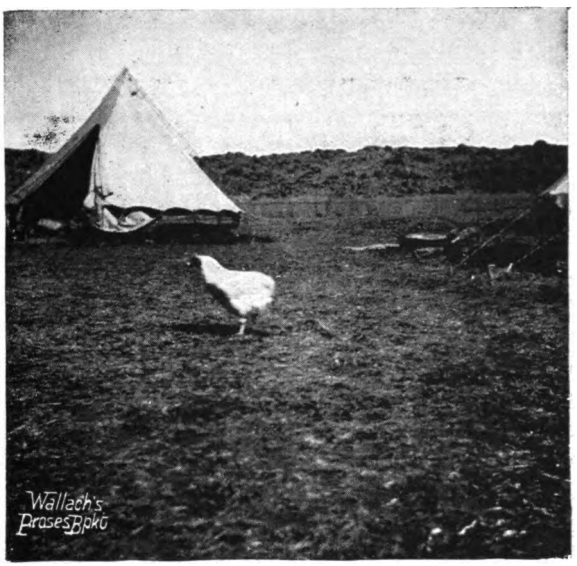
gated to some other sphere of duty. We believe he suffered from unquenchable thirst, hence the origin and magnitude of his imagination.

On August 2nd the 42nd Battery R.F.A. were taken from us at Rooi Pynt, much to our regret, and were sent to Sand Spruit beyond Volksrust. As a momento they left "C" Squadron five hens and a cock, which had



"Jemima."

been all through the siege of Ladysmith with the battery; a remarkable fact when one comes to consider what the market value of fowls was during the latter end of the siege. One especially, a white hen called "Jemima" became a great favourite, being full of character. She had been wounded in the early part of the siege and had a lame leg in consequence, but she was a good layer, and that saved her life. It may be

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mentioned that "Jemima" accompanied the regiment all through the remainder of the campaign and started for home with the regiment in September, 1902. Unfortunately she was washed overboard in the Solent and drowned. An account of this extraordinary bird is given in the second volume of *The Eagle*; but we publish her photograph in this number.

The Boers woke up a bit on August 4th, when a body of 50 crossed Sales Drift and drove in one of our patrols. Two days afterwards the Utrecht Boers sent back under a flag of truce 185 head of cattle belonging to a man named Miller. The reason for this was difficult to discover, but Piet Uys, a leading man in that command, had been very upset because his farm in Natal (about one and a half miles from Dick's Drift), had been burnt by us a short time before, and Miller might have been afraid we would do similar damage to his property.

On the 7th, a patrol of B.M.I. was captured near Wool's Drift. We sent out support but the Boers had already retired towards Utrecht. The next day a patrol of ours towards Muller's Pass on the Drakensberg, was attacked and chased by 20 Boers, which showed that the enemy was getting more active on both sides of us. A support was sent out and the Boers retired up the mountains.

On the 13th there were two loud explosions about 2 a.m., which woke us all up. It turned out that the Boers had blown up the line north of Newcastle, but without doing much damage. "B" Squadron was sent out under Captain Rogers to Newcastle in case it might be wanted, —only 20 foot of rail and a small culvert had been damaged. Two days afterwards "A" Squadron under Captain McNeile proceeded up the Drakensberg and found Muller's Pass unoccupied.

On August 19th the Boers were very lively all along the line from Ingogo to Ingagane, and on the following day our posts at Duckponds was driven in, losing one

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man taken prisoner (Private Reynolds "C" Squadron). About 500 Boers had crossed the Buffalo at Dick's Drift, mostly belonging to the Utrecht and Wakkerstoom Commandos. Reinforcements were at once sent from Newcastle, Rooi Pynt and Ingagane, with the 13th Hussars co-operating on our left, and the enemy was soon driven back across the Buffalo. The Boers simultaneous-

12 pdr. Gun. Rooi Pynt.

ly attacked the 5th Dragoon Guards at Ingogo and our posts at Tendega, and Private Hancock was unfortunately killed at the latter place.

On August 21st the enemy attacked the 5th Dragoon Guards at Ingogo but were driven off. It seemed as though the Boers were trying to find a weak spot somewhere in our lines of communication. The next

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day the Boers crossed at Wool's Drift at dawn and attacked the 13th Hussars at Mathews' farm. We moved out with one squadron to co-operate on the right bank of the N'Kandu river. Major Smithson, 13th Hussars, was shot through both knees, and he lost one man and nine horses killed.

On the 24th the patrols from Duckponds and Tendega farms were again driven in, and the Boers attacked the latter place in force. They had a pom-pom with them, but were driven off and retired across the Buffalo. They raided a colliery between Duckponds and Tendega and captured a wagon and mules, together with 100 lb. of dynamite and some detonators, an incident which might easily have been prevented by the Naval 12 pounder on Rooi Pynt, but the R.A. Officer in charge took them for a party of our own people and held his fire until too late.

After all this activity on the part of the enemy we had a few days quiet. We made a reconnaissance towards Utrecht on the 27th inst. with the 13th Hussars, but saw nothing. We heard that the 5th (Hildyard's) Division was concentrating at Volksrust preparatory to marching on Utrecht from the north.

On the 4th September, the Regiment joined the rest of the cavalry, guns and infantry at Umbana, when we started to make a reconnaissance in force to the Belela's Berg. Leaving Umbana on the 17th, "B" Squadron met 100 Boers and gave chase, supported by A Squadron: "C" Squadron working round the right. The Boers galloped for the Bella's Beerg. It looked as though we had got them in a trap, with "C" Squadron, galloping round a kopje, and cutting them off along the foot of the berg; but a goat track, unknown to us, gave them the loophole for escape, up which they got away under a smart peppering. Returning to Rooi Pynt on the 8th inst. we went back to Umbana again, and then reconnoitred towards Utrecht and camped just outside the

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town. Our Scouts entered Utrecht on the 11th and released Pte. Reynolds and a Corporal of the 5th Dragoon Guards. They had been living on mealie pap, which was not very appetising, but otherwise they had been well treated. On the 11th Hildyard marched into Utrecht from the north with his division. After two

Fort Makins. Rooi Pynt.

days' convoy work, the regiment returned to its old quarters on the 13th.

On September 14th "A" and "B" Squadrons under Lord Basing marched to De Waal's farm to take part in a reconnaissance to Vryheid, co-operating with Dartnell on the south, coming from Dundee, and Hildyard on the north from Utrecht. These two squadrons went to De Waal's farm the first night, then to De Jager's Drift and then Conference Hill, returning on the 20th via

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Stale's Drift, having lost Corporal Moore, "A" Squadron, killed.

On the 21st two troops of "C" Squadron were sent off to bivouac at Konigsberg, with orders to watch Sache's and Muller's Passes in the Drakensberg. Now that Wakkerstroom, Utrecht and Vryheid were all occupied by our troops, the pressure on the eastern side of the Newcastle district had been somewhat relieved, and as Boers had been reported along the top of the Drakensberg, east of Harrismith, we now turned our attention more to the western flank, and threw out a line of outposts towards the Normandien Valley. There were numerous Passes over the berg in this neighbourhood, the principal ones being Botha's Pass to the north, and Muller's Pass to the west; but all the small ones were negotiable and had to be watched.

On September 26th "B" Squadron, under Captain Rogers, left by train for Van Reenen's (Orange Free State), travelling via Ladysmith, and was encamped at a station on the line called Albertina.

The headquarters of the Regiment and "A" squadron now joined "C" Squadron at Rooi Pynt, from Ingagane, one troop of "A" Squadron, however, going to Dannhauser for 10 days.

During October the regiment took part in a lot of convoy work to Utrecht. 2nd Lieuts. Forbes-Leith and Lord Alastair Innes-Ker joined us on the 18th, and on the 25th Lord Basing was admitted to hospital with enteric fever. On the 27th "A" Squadron, under Captain McNeile, accompanied Major Williams, 13th Hussars, to Glencoe to intercept some Boers, said to be endeavouring to break across from Zululand to the Orange Free State. This, however, they failed to do, but had a long and exciting chase after about 60 of them, who, however, getting a long start, gained the berg, south of Muller's Pass. A party of "C" Squadron from Konigsberg, who had been ordered out in the same direction,

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could not get touch with Williams, but arrived just in time to see the last few Boers disappear over the top of the Pass.

On the 30th, headquarters and all the rest of the regiment who were not away, i.e., two troops "A" Squadron and two troops "C" Squadron moved to Newcastle and encamped just south of it, and west of the main road.

Piet Uys' Farm.

November was passed in much the same manner as October. Convoys to Utrecht and back had to be escorted twice a week, and this was varied by an occasional reconnaissance, notably one on the 14th, when one troop of "C" Squadron, with two troops 5th Dragoon Guards, all under Makins, reconnoitred to Inchanga Drift (Buffalo). They were met there by some M.I. from De Waal's farm, but nothing of incident occurred, except

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that a helio message was received from Utrecht saying they were heavily attacked.

On the 20th Lord Basing was sufficiently convalescent to leave Newcastle for Durban en route for England on sick leave, and Major Carr-Ellison took over the command of the regiment.

On December 11th headquarters, with two troops of "C" Squadron and one troop "A" Squadron made a long march to De Jager's Drift via De Waal's farm. We started in the evening and reached our destination at 1 p.m. the following day. We were placed under the command of Colonel Blomfield, O. C. Dundee Sub-District, and formed part of a force consisting of seven companies of Infantry, 400 B.M.I., V.C.R., and Natal Police, eight guns R.F.A. and one 12-pr. We marched to the Blood River on the 13th and the next day engaged a strong party of Boers on Scheeper's Nek, the advance guard under Glyn doing particularly good work. The Boers were driven north and Colonel Hubert Gough came up from the south and camped with us on Scheepers's Nek. We marched into Vryheid next day, and on the 16th made a long reconnaissance to the north, engaging a few Boers with gun fire. We returned on the 18th, and camped successively on the Blood River, De Jager's Drift and Tendega, reaching Newcastle again on Friday the 21st.

The following letter, relating to the above, was sent by the O.C. Dundee sub-District to the G.O.C. Newcastle sub-District:—

To G.O.C. Newcastle Sub-District.

The squadron 1st Royal Dragoons, so kindly lent me by you, returned to your command yesterday morning.

2. I wish to bring to your notice the very skilful manner in which Major Carr-Ellison managed his night march from Newcastle to De Jager's Drift on the 11th-12th. The distance was nearly 50 miles, yet the horses arrived fit and well.

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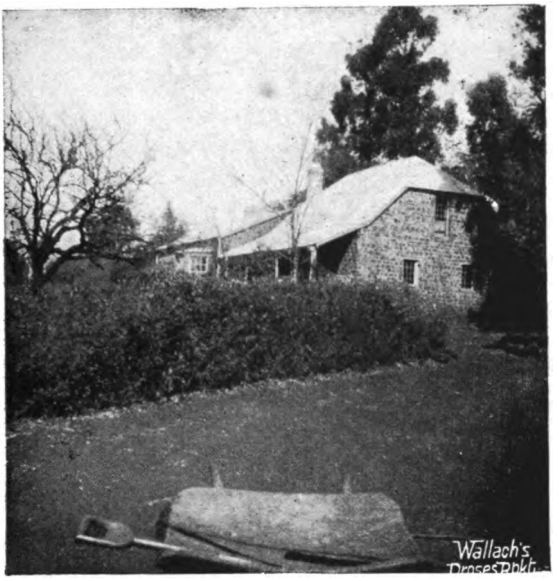
3. I wish to express my admiration of the clever handling of this squadron by Major Carr-Ellison from the 12th to the 20th inst. On the 14th at Scheeper's Nek one troop was in a rather difficult position for a bit, but the prompt action of Lieut. Glyn at once put all right on that flank, till he could be reinforced and the flank made secure by another troop of the Royals.



Rider Haggards' Farm. Rooi Pynt.

4. I am very much obliged to you for the service of this squadron, which very materially contributed to the success of the affair at Scheeper's Nek, and to the success also of a strong reconnaissance at Vryheid, on the 16th inst.

(Signed) CHARLES BLOMFIELD, Colonel
Com. Dundee Sub-District.

Dundee, 21st December, 1900.

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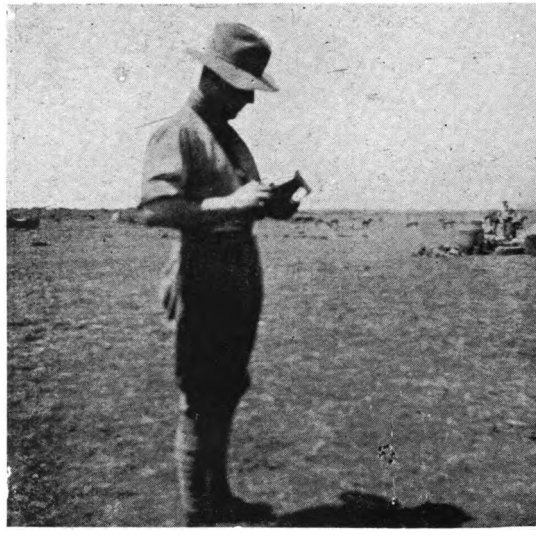
On the 21st Sir Merrik Burrel went home sick and did not return to us during the remainder of the war.

We kept Christmas Day so far as campaigning allowed us; there was a concert at Newcastle and we returned late, not expecting to be disturbed. But not long after midnight we got the order to turn out, and go to the assistance of Utrecht, which was being heavily



2nd. Lieut. P. F. Forbes-Leith.

attacked. Two troops of "C" and one of "B" Squadron left Newcastle at 3.45 a.m., and marched to Umbana. It appeared that a party of Boers under a Russian had sent in to the O.C. Utrecht a demand for certain luxuries to celebrate Christmas. The demand concluded by saying, that if the things were not sent, they would come and take them. Naturally the Christmas fare was not sent, hence this attack, which was chiefly directed at the Supply Depot. The attack, which was quite a vigorous and desperate one, failed, and it is sad to think that the

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enterprising Russian's share of the enterprise, was a bullet in the stomach, which necessitated his being buried the following day.

Forbes-Leith died on the 31st from enteric fever in the hospital at Newcastle, and was buried the same day —a sad ending to the year 1900.

The year 1901 opened quietly for us. The only news

Watering in Buffalo River.

was from home, and that was the death of the Queen, which occurred on January 22nd. Eighty-one guns were fired as a salute and the same number on the day of the funeral. There was also a proclamation ceremony on Monday, February 4th. The same duties were carried out by us, of convoy and reconnaissance work, and troops were distributed round Newcastle as before.

On February 11th began the most miserable few

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weeks that we spent during the whole war, known generally as the "Elandsberg Trek," the object of which was to take out supplies for French's columns. Kitchener's design had been to sweep the whole of the Eastern Transvaal, and "drive the Boers up against the Swazi and Zulu borders, and force them to surrender. Preparations for this movement were begun in the 2nd week of January and instructions for the movement were issued on the 24th." The starting line was from Springs up to the Delagoa Railway line near Pienaar's Poort, and five columns started from here to drive south-east, while two others started from Balmoral and Wonderfontein, to move south and then join up with the other columns. Thus there were seven columns, with a fighting strength of 14,000 men, and 58 guns and pompoms; a feeding strength of 21,000 men, 11,500 horses and 9,000 mules. These columns started on 28th January, and had reached Ermelo, round which the columns formed a large arc of a circle from Lake Christie to Witpunt, on February 4th and 5th, which ended the first phase. They started again on the 9th, and were on a line Amsterdam—Piet Retief on the 16th.

French had been supplied from Greylingstad and Standerton on the Natal railway, while the northern columns had brought their own supplies. The whole was now to be supplied from Natal. "It was on the 10th only, that Hildyard received explicit instructions to send nine days' rations for 12,000 men and 15,600 animals from Newcastle to Luneberg. On the 18th at Luneberg the convoy was to be met by Dartnell and escorted by him to the north. This first consignment of stores was intended to provision the four southern columns. By the 19th a second instalment nearly as large was to reach Luneberg to supply the wants of the three northern columns." Hildyard lost no time and "on the 12th the greater part of the first convoy of 190 wagons escorted by 1000 men and six guns, under Brig.-General

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Burn-Murdoch, left Newcastle." The force consisted of Headquarters and 6 troops of the Royal Dragoons, 120; 5th Dragoon Guards, 100; Natal Vol. Comp. Regt., 220; four guns 19th Battery; 200 details, 2nd Middlesex (4 companies), 2nd Royal Lancasters (1 company), two 12-pounders. The last wagon was in Utrecht on the evening of the 12th.

Lieut. H. B. Fawcus, R.A.M.C. (on right.)
Seated in Fort Makins, Rooi Pynt.

"It was 35 miles from Utrecht to Luneberg. The road which had never before been used by the British, was suspected to be in very bad condition, and was known to mount heavy gradients, and to lead over three substantial spruits. Rain had already fallen and more was imminent. The convoy, so hastily requisitioned from so many different sources, was overloaded and in bad or-

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der for the road, with a serious scarcity of conductors, and an entire lack of spare gear. Nothing was known about the enemy, save that small bands had for months been hovering about in the vicinity, together with the vague rumour that commandos flying before French were likely to pour in the district. Considering the road, the shortcomings of the convoy, and the weather, it may be doubted whether it was physically possible to carry the supplies as far as Luneberg within the ap-

Passing stores over Chaka Spruit.

pointed time." In these words "The Times History" accounts for the delay which ensued.

We started on the 11th February and reached Umbana, and went on to Utrecht the following day. The last wagon reached Utrecht on the 13th and we made a reconnaissance up the hill and towards the Pivaan River, together with the Vol. Comp. Regt., and a section R.F.A., all under Colonel Evans. Some 200 Boers were met and driven back with some loss. Lieutenant Leighton with a troop showed great promptitude and

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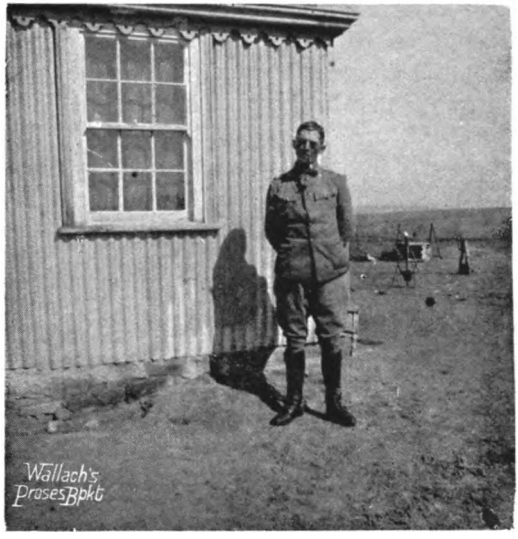
dash in seizing a kopje, losing one man slightly wounded.

During the next two days the convoy toiled up the steep hill. On the last of these days the rain began, and on the following day there was mist and rain all day and we couldn't move. We started on the 17th in thick fog and rain for Pivaan's River. Then the rain fell unceasingly day and night for 6 days, and really went on almost continuously during the whole opera-



Lieutenant Leighton.

tions. Chaka Spruit, now in flood, was reached by a few wagons on the 23rd and some stores were passed across by a hand-line to Rimington's men on the other bank.

On the 24th the leading wagons got across and were escorted by "C" Squadron under Captain Makins to General Rimington's camp; one team of oxen being washed away and drowned. The Inniskilling Dragoons were with Rimington, and as most of the Royal Dra-

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goon reservists had been posted to them, there were many old friends to be found in the camp—nearly forty old Royals were there.

Positions were now taken up all along the road from Utrecht to Chaka Spruit by our force, in order to pass the convoy under mounted escort from post to post.

From February 26th to March 9th the regiment was posted at Elandsberg Nek, and the section of road placed under the command of Major Carr-Ellison. By continuous hard work, and with very great labour, we were able to keep the hill on the further slope of the Nek in sufficiently good repair to enable wagons to move down. But owing to the execrable weather, there was naturally some delay.

We were without tents all this trek and only had a leaky tarpaulin, stretched from a wagon, under which to shelter, and we were continually soaked to the skin and with bedding never dried. Our horses, still practically all English ones, were reduced to a scale of 3 and 4 lbs. of corn a day, and as there was no grazing they suffered terribly. No rations were allowed to be taken off any of the convoy wagons, which went through intact to French's columns.

On March 9th the regiment moved back to Pivaan's Poort, where, if possible the road presented greater difficulties. Part of the road here had to be corduroyed as there was no way round, and the road was a bottomless quagmire.

The story of the acquisition of our mess-wagon gives an instance of the state of things. It was here that we picked up a G.S. Wagon which had been abandoned and which served us as our mess-wagon during the remainder of the war. The iron rail of its high box seat was just visible above the mud, and we dug out the wagon and annexed it.

On March 14th and 15th, the Boers in considerable force endeavoured to break through the line. We had

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the lion's share of the fighting and the attempt was defeated. A patrol of ours went carelessly up to a kopje, where a small party of Boers were ensconced, and Private Higgins was killed and Privates Castleton and Fryer very severely wounded.

On March 27th the Regiment returned to Newcastle. In the G.O.C.'s report on the above operations, Major Carr-Ellison, Captain Makins, Lieutenants Leighton and Hardwick, and R.S.M. Parsons were mentioned for specially good work.

Concerning all this period "The Times History" says:— "The initial error underlying all this wholesale collapse in the system of supply was Kitchener's choice, on insufficient information, of the Utrecht-Luneberg line as the channel for traffic. A better line existed, via Volksrust and Wakkerstroom, and thence to Piet Retief; and on French's suggestion, this supplementary line was opened on February 28th. Even here the swollen Ingogo and Assegai Rivers caused delay, but Colonel Bullock succeeded in bringing in two heavy convoys on March 5th and 21st. Without this welcome aid French might have lost his liberty of action during an indefinitely longer period, for from the 6th to the 13th of March, another entire week of rain reduced the Utrecht-Luneberg road almost to the point of obliteration. It was abandoned altogether on the 16th, and a third line opened from Vryheid to Paul Pietersburg."

This was a thankless and very difficult task, entailing untold work and hardship. French impatiently awaiting his supplies at Piet Retief, did not evidently realise the enormous difficulties which were being encountered. However, his Staff Officer, Colonel Hunter-Weston, on coming down the line to have a look round, saw with his own eyes the state of affairs. It was due to the energy of General Burn-Murdoch and the cheerful and untiring labour of the troops that the convoy got through as well as it did.

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PERIOD IV.

But at last, after all the wretched weeks of the Elandsberg Trek, we were to be slipped from the leash. We received orders to leave Newcastle and pursue an active career in the Eastern Transvaal. Everyone was delighted at the prospect, as we had had an all too sufficient dose of Newcastle and the district all round, to last the veriest glutton for a lifetime. We left Lieut. Hon. C. H. C. Guest as Intelligence Officer and Lieut. P. E. Hardwick as A.D.C. to Brig.-General Burn-Murdoch, Commanding the Newcastle Sub-District.

On April 5th the Regiment entrained by Squadrons for Belfast, "B" Squadron coming from Albertina. Our move was not a very expeditious one, as we crawled along the line by day, and remained halted by night, helping the defence of the places we stopped at, if required. On reaching Pretoria we managed to get our horses out to stretch their legs, finally arriving at Belfast and taking the place of the 14th Hussars, on April 10th. There was a tremendous difference in temperature between Natal and Belfast which is over 6,000 feet above sea level, and there was a cold mist our first night.

The column we joined, was under the command of Colonel Pulteney, Scots Guards, and besides ourselves there were the Inniskillings (under Major Dauncey), the 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards, 4 guns "T" Battery, R.H.A., 1 Howitzer, 1 pom-pom, besides R.E., Field Ambulance, etc. All the columns about to act to the North of the line were under Sir Bindon Blood.

The following brief account of the situation at this juncture will help the reader.

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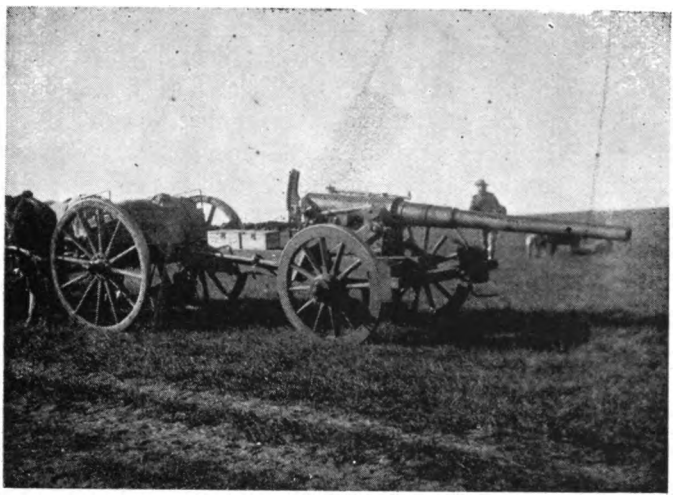
After French's campaign in the Eastern Transvaal south of the Delagoa Bay line, and the abortive amnesty with Botha to discuss terms of peace, Kitchener decided to operate in the district to the North-east of the Transvaal.

The boundaries of this district were the Delagoa Bay



Our Naval 12 pdr.

railway line on the south, the Pietersburg railway line on the west, the line of fortified posts from Machadodorp to Lydenburg on the east, and the inhospitable country of Secokuniland and the Zoutpansberg on the north. "The most valuable region for the Boers was that lying east of the Olifants river and specially the mountainous Lydenburg district, containing the Bothasberg, the Tantjesberg, and the Steenkampsberg. This country has a healthy climate, and though wild enough, and very difficult of access, contains some rich and well watered valleys, and some excellent grazing. In the

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recesses of the hills were hollows and glens innumerable, which afforded admirable shelter to the guerilla bands. Here, with his headquarters at Windhoek, Ben Viljoen controlled the commandoes of the north-east, and here at the farm Paardeplaats, upon the summit of the Tantjesberg, guarded by a small detachment of Pretoria Mounted Rifles lay ensconced the Transvaal Government." *

Viljoen's only important success had been the capture of Helvetia, a post on the Lydenburg-Machadodorp blockhouse line, at the end of December, 1900.

The British forces had up to this period never got beyond Pienaar's River on the northern line, and the preliminary step was to send Plumer up to Pietersburg, dropping posts along the line. Having done this, Plumer was then to send troops down to block the drifts across the Olifants River, while six columns under Sir Bindon Blood, who had just arrived from India, "were to start from various points on the southern and eastern sides and to move north and west. The primary object of these columns was to surround and capture Viljoen's forces; but should Viljoen's burghers break out to the west, the troops sent down from Pietersburg to hold the line of the Olifant's River were intended to form an exterior line of resistance, blocking escape to the Bushveld." Plumer started on March 26th and reached Pietersburg on April 8th. Leaving there again on the 14th he marched to block the drifts on the Olifant's River.

"Pulteney's Cavalry column (to which we belonged) was to start from Belfast, and march north on Roos Senekal, by way of Dullstroom. On Pulteney's left Luit.-Col. G. E. Benson, R.A., was to march north-east from Middelburg, cross the Bothasberg, and watch the southern exit of the Steelpoort Valley. Benson and

* Times History.

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Pulteney were placed under the general control of Major-Genl. Featherstonhaugh. On Benson's left, a column formed at Middelburg under Major-Genl. S. Beatson was to advance due north and in the first instance garrison two drifts on the Olifant's River..... With the rest of his force he was to operate in the angle between the Blood and Olifant's Rivers, but without any explicit instructions to close the Blood River Valley." *

Three more columns were to act in conjunction from the east. "Lt.-Colonel Douglas, marching from Witklip, a little south of Lydenburg, was to penetrate the Steenkampsberg and in co-operation with Pulteney, move on Dullstroom. The other two columns under Major-Genl. Walter Kitchener and Colonel Park were to leave Lydenburg and strike out to the north-east. Park was to halt in the neighbourhood of Rietfontein, where he could watch the northern exits of the Steelpoort Valley and the parallel valley of Dwars River. Walter Kitchener was to march on over the Magnet Heights to Fort Weber thence wheeling to the south he was intended to block the Blood River Valley. Since he had considerably the longest march to make and one of the most important duties to perform, it was unfortunate that, of all the columns, his was the least mobile."

"In round numbers Blood had under his hand 11,000 rifles and 31 guns. The force was cumbrous. Infantry largely predominated..... the two aims of clearing the country, and defeating the enemy were confused....." *

On April 16th our column marched north from Belfast to Nagelijkheid about 15 miles. In the afternoon we heard some artillery fire to the east, which turned out to be the next column engaged with some of Viljoen's commando. We encountered a few Boers who retired, but Corporal Vigor was wounded. The follow-

* Times History.

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ing day we marched into Dullstroom, 7 miles, and joined Colonel Douglas' column, with parts of the 18th and 19th Hussars. There was no opposition except for a little sniping.

On the 18th, the cavalry under Colonel Rimington made a reconnaissance about 12 miles to the north-east, driving off a few Boers. Some Boer families were also sent in. Nothing much was found in Dullstroom, but a blacksmith's shop had been used for making machines for train-wrecking, and one such was found.

The next day we marched north over some steep hills and a bad drift to Windhoek. There was some sniping, and a horse of "C" Squadron was killed. We camped close to Viljoen's late laager, and picked up a lot of his papers, but none of importance. The following day we stood fast.

On the 21st we moved off again northwards and got into some rather hairy country. Some snipers were making themselves very annoying to the column from some hills on our left, close under which the road was about to run. "C" Squadron under Captain Makins were sent on to seize a prominent feature. They galloped on, wheeled right under the hill, and dismounting did very good time to the top. The Squadron leader offered a sovereign to the first man up. Very good time was made, Lieut. Leighton being first, Pte. Bosley second and the Squadron leader third. Bosley received the prize, which he now wears on his watch chain. They were sniped going up, but nobody was hit, and on arriving at the top there was some very pretty shooting at a few Boers who passed from right to left across the front, two of which were bowled over and assisted away by their comrades. We found one later, hit through the stomach. Another squadron came up after a short time, and a Boer was put up among the rocks. The next few seconds were dangerous to many people besides the

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poor Boer, as those all round, stood up, snapping at him as though he was a rabbit. Luckily nobody was hit except the Boer, who got a bullet through his neck. The man turned out to be a Z.A.R.P. on whom was found a pocketbook containing a complete detailed list of all the columns under Sir Bindon Blood, with their dates of starting, also our signalling code—in fact he had far more information about the concerted movement then we had! The Scots Guards took "C" Squadron's place on the hill at night, the officer in charge finding a new pair of Cogswell and Harrison guns under a rock just where we had been,—which was bad luck, but we had been too busy to go poking about.

The next day we marched westwards into Roos Senekal through a rocky and very nasty-looking pass over the Berg. Luckily for us the Boers did not obstruct our passage. Fifty Boers, mostly Z.A.R.P.s under Commandant Kriel surrendered at the Landdrost's Office, and a destroyed pom-pom was found. We camped just to the west of the town on a kopje of very magnetic rock. All the small particles of grit would stick on to any stone as on to a magnet,—not a pleasant spot in the event of a thunderstorm.

The next few days were spent in clearing the country in the neighbourhood and a good many Boers either surrendered or were taken. Several Boer Government documents were found (among them about £50,000 in unsigned notes), and some families collected to be sent in. One of our field guns was found destroyed; it was said to have been one of Long's guns from Colenso. The Court House was burnt, when a great number of cartridges, hidden in the roof, kept going off. We also fitted ourselves out with Cape carts at this town.

On the 29th we marched back south fourteen miles to Blinkwater, where Sir Bindon Blood had arrived,—we captured six of the enemy en route. On May 1st

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we paid a surprise return visit to Roos Senekal. Turning out at 10.30 p.m. with a light moon, Roos Senekal was surrounded by 5.30 a.m. by the Royals and Inniskillings. A certain number of Boers had returned, and the bag was: two Boers killed, one wounded, and nine prisoners, and six wagons with teams. We halted at Modderspruit and reached Klipspruit the following day.

On the 5th we marched again via Elandslaagte for Bankfontein, near Middelburg, which was reached the next day. Here we had a short rest and a draft of 6 officers, 210 N.C.O.'s and men, 25 chargers and 179 troop horses joined us.

The trek had been a useful one but the main object, viz., the ensnaring of Viljoen had failed. He had slipped over the Tantjesberg and down the Blood river, before Kitchener had been able to block it, and had crossed the Olifant's river at a bad and unwatched drift, between the dates of April 20th and 22nd. After moving about irresolutely, he crossed the line near Balmoral Station, early in May, to the south. However, in reckoning up the total spoil, the columns had accounted for 1,100 Boers, but mostly voluntary surrenders. Two Krupps, a "Long Tom," a 4.7 gun captured at Helvetia, a 15 pdr., 3 pom-poms and 2 maxims were accounted for, to say nothing of rifles, ammunition, wagons, cattle, sheep, etc. Many mills and granaries had been destroyed and several hundred families removed to concentration camps.

While our column rested at Bankfontein, another concerted movement was being arranged for Sir Bindon Blood's columns in the Eastern Transvaal, south of the Delagoa Bay line, whither Viljoen had taken refuge, after his escape, and where Botha's best commandos had been resting for nearly three months. No fewer than thirteen columns were prepared early in May—Bullock started from Volksrust on April 29th and marched on

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Ermelo, reaching it on May 9th. Rimington left Standerton on May 14th and joined Bullock at Ermelo.

"Thereafter those two units, raiding the country in all directions, took up a stopping line from Ermelo to Lake Chrissie, blocking the exits from the area about

Boer native Scout. All this man's saddlery belonged to "The Blues" and was stamped R. H. G.

to be swept by the main force..... Now began two distinct but converging sets of operations, one by Sir Bindon Blood from the Delagoa Bay railway, the other by Plumer from Pretoria and the western line." As our part was solely in connection with the former, we need not say much about the latter .

"The tactics of Sir Bindon Blood had as their object a junction with Bullock and a complete clearance of the zones around Carolina, Steynsdorp, down to Amster-

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dam, much of which had been untouched by French during his raid of March and April. For this task six columns and a brigade of cavalry were alotted, which up to May 12th were posted as follows:—At Middelburg, Major-General F. W. Kitchener and Lieut.-Colonel W. P. Pulteney; at Belfast, Lieut.-Colonel G. E. Benson; at Machadodorp, Lieut.-Colonel W. Douglas; at

Lieut. E. York inspecting his bag of geese.

Wonderfontein, Major-General J. M. Babington with a Cavalry Brigade; at Nelspruit, Brig.-General J. Spens, to be joined later by Colonel C. W. Park from Lydenburg." *

Our column, which consisted of the same units as on the Roos-Senekal trek, marched 8 miles to Rochdale on May 12th and in conjunction with Kitchener swept

* Official History.

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the country on either bank of the Klein Olifant's River. About 200 Boers were soon met at Driehoek, who captured and released a man of the Inniskillings. We camped at Eikeboom on the 13th and Boschmansfontein the following night. On the 15th we were at de Wilte's Kranz and Kitchener at Grobler's Recht, respectively. There was a lot of sniping and worrying of our rearguard. On the 16th Douglas had reached Uitkomst, his left flank being considerably harrassed. We camped

Watering at Lake Chrissie.

successively at Hartebeestspruit and Botha's Rust, and reached Simonsdale at Lake Chrissie on the 18th.

"Thus Kitchener and Pulteney reached the Carolina-Ermelo road at the source of the Vaal River on the 18th, while Benson, who had only left Belfast on the 16th, was at Bonnefoi, where he joined hands with Douglas, and co-operated with him in hunting the scattered groups of Boers who were hiding in the Komati Valley. Carolina, guarded on three sides was now safe, and there

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the Cavalry Brigade was based on the 18th for operation to the eastward." * Whilst Benson and Douglas to the northward cleared the country to the banks of the Komati about Kalkkloof and Driehoek, our column echeloned on Kitchener's right flank, marched on to the east.

The next day, leaving Lake Chrissie, we went on to Bothwell and caught two Boers, and then to Lilieburn, on the Umpilusi River, and again on to Holnek, where

Watering at Lake Chrissie.

some sharp sniping occurred. Our guns were brought into action, but one man of the Inniskillings was killed.

The country we had been through was a great contrast to the mountains of the Roos-Senekal district, and consisted of endless rolling grass plains. There seemed to be many more Boers behind us than in front. From the crest of a hill to the bottom was sometimes 4 miles—so that the rearguard had a difficult proposition, as directly it left the crest, strongish parties of Boer snipers

* Official History.

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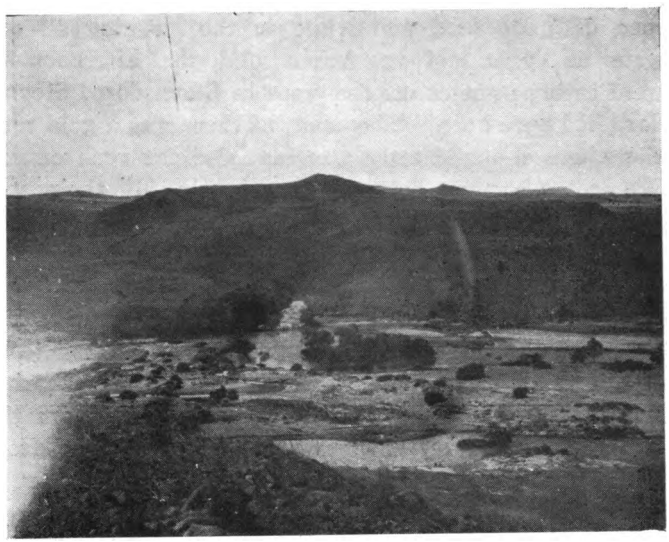
were on it and there was no other decent spot, for the rearguard to turn round and show its teeth, for about 4 miles,—thus the rearguard sometimes had the choice of either being left miles behind with the chance of being cut off, or being on top of the wagons. There never seemed any idea of making a sudden dash back at them, and it was work which wanted great discipline and moral,—it was an easy game for the Boers, but a rotten



Komati River.

game for the O.C. rearguard, who did not want to see men killed to no purpose.

We reached Pittsville on the 22nd, where a post of Scots Guards, together with "A" Squadron, Royals, was established under Major Baden Powell, and then marched the next day to Lonstkraal where we stayed three days, and had the magnificent bag of one Burgher. On the 26th we went on to Tygerkloof, on the edge of the high

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veld, close to the Swaziland border and overlooking the Komati Valley, which could only be entered at certain passes down the cliffs. We had a fire one evening here; it was started by the Gunners and swept through two troops, burning saddlery, and the feet of some horses, so that about four had to be destroyed.

We left the Scots Guards at Tygerkloof and went down to Steynsdorp in the Komati Valley. Though only 5 miles as the crow flies, it is a drop by a very steep road of 3,000 feet, and while in the morning all our water at Tygerkloof was frozen solid, that afternoon we were eating oranges off the trees in Steynsdorp. Steynsdorp had once been a busy spot, as there was a gold rush there, but it was mostly washing, and the rush ceased. We met a strange party of Swazies in all their war apparel,—we also heard a few shots which was reported to be a small party of Boers being shot at by Swazies, as they tried to enter Swaziland.

We marched on to Kranskop on the Komati River about 5 miles; here the road ended and we seemed to be at the end of all things, with the river disappearing through a gorge. We saw the Sheba Mine up on the side of a mountain, and we were only separated from Barberton by a mountainous divide. Our descent drove some Boers and cattle out of their hiding places, and these were captured by a neighbouring column.

We returned to Steynsdorp next day and remained there on Thursday, the 30th, when two troops under Major Rogers captured 14 Boers, who were hiding in a wooded valley, together with two boys, 53 horses, a wagon and a cart.

The following day we returned to Tygerkloof, where we remained for a few days, reconnoitering and clearing farms, and we collected several wagons, carts, and good stores of mealies. June 2nd was a memorable day; we were going out on a reconnaissance but the morning

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broke with a gale and a blizzard—men and horses were frozen stiff and no food could be cooked, so we thought better of it and remained *in statu quo*. We saw about 150 Boers the next day, who made off south on our approach,—it was the largest party we had seen for some time.

On the 12th we started off southwards and kept close along the Swazi border. Our column split up into two

Swazi Warriors, Steynsburg.

parties for three days, thus covering a wider front. We marched first to Redhill, then to Caithness where "A" Squadron joined us again from Pittsville, and then to Northdene, entering Amsterdam on the 15th at the same time as the other part of the column. Amsterdam was found totally destroyed, and no Boers were there. We now got orders to march back to Carolina, which we

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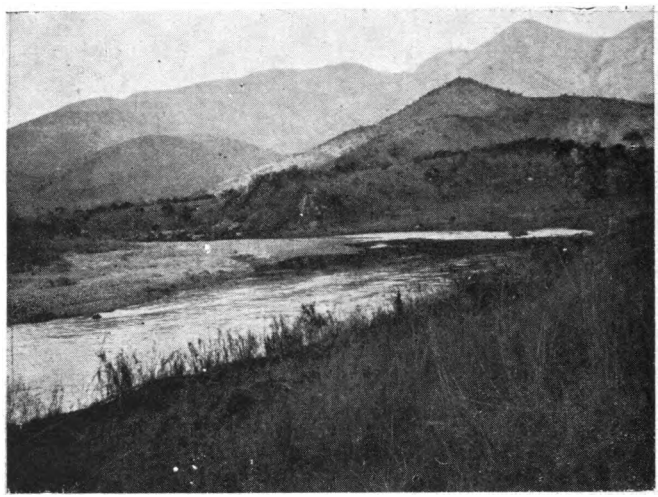
did via Glen Eland, Bankplaats, Schimmelhoek reaching Driefontein on the 19th. Here we had a bit of a scrap with some Boers who made clever use of the ground, and it was difficult to see from where we were being fired at, Private Harris was wounded, and Private Walters was killed, being shot dead while waiting to help along a sick comrade. We camped just by a pan about three quarters of a mile across, with high reeds in the centre.



Komati River.

By accident, something was seen in the reeds, and on search being made, eleven wagons with harness and one team of oxen were found hidden in the middle of the lake, which turned out to be only 4 feet deep, with a hard bottom.

On the 20th we marched thirteen miles to Lilliefontein and reached Carolina the next day, doing another thirteen miles. Carolina was garrisoned by half a battalion of the Seaforths and some 5th Lancers under

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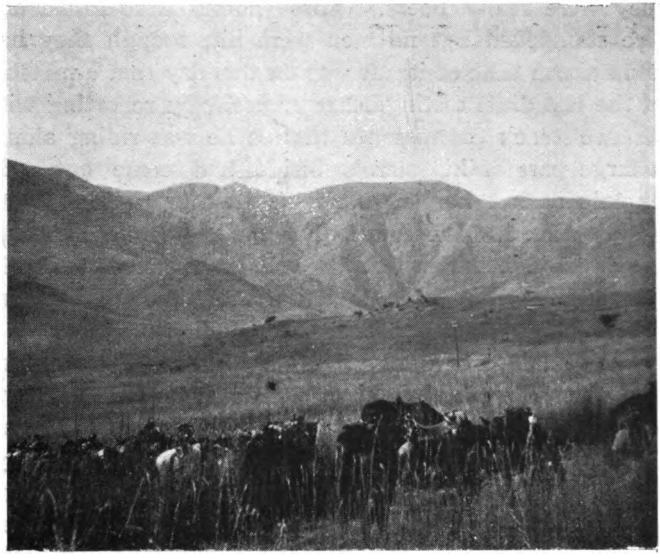
Colonel Hughes-Hallett. Here we remained a day, and proceeded on the 23rd to Naudeshoek, and then to Grobbelaar's Rest. From here we made a reconnaissance to De Witte Kranz, and when we were about to return an orderly came in from the flank troop under Lieut. Knowles on the left to say that they were in difficulties. Two squadrons were at once sent out to their assistance,



Steynsdorp Valley.

and after a gallop of three miles, found the troop in a stone kraal surrounded by about 50 Boers, at such close range that it was impossible for the men to shoot back, as there was no head cover and anything showing above the wall was at once hit. The kraal was in a depression and the Boers all round on the higher ground. The Boers made off on the support coming up, and it was found that the incident had occurred, through so many

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of the enemy being dressed in khaki, and looking exactly like our men. Knowles had pursued two Boers for some distance when he was suddenly fired into from his right rear. After inspection he was so sure that this was done by some of our men, that he went into the kraal and hoisting his helmet on a rifle, waved and shouted to them to stop shooting, whereupon they came much nearer and surrounded him before he discovered that they were really Boers. Three horses were killed and five stampeded but no men were hit, though they had had a warm time of it. It was on this day that a member of the last draft distinguished himself, by reporting with an awe-struck countenance that as he was riding along, a large part of his mare's inside had come out. He explained that he had done his best to replace it but without avail. We found that the mare, which was a very nice one and which we had commandeered on the Elandsberg trek, had slipped a foal, though she had shown no signs of being in that condition.

We remained at Grobbelaar's Recht the following day and then marched to Tweefontein, and then again to Vaalbank, where we remained for three days. We then went on the Monsen's store. On leaving here the next day, July 1st, a Royal Dragoon reservist, named Grattage, serving with the Inniskillings, was shot dead by a Boer, who had crept up quite close, and then made off. We reached Aaronsfontein, and on the 3rd reached Rochdale again, near Middelburg. We remained here three days and then camped just North of Middelburg. On the 7th Lord Basing rejoined from sick leave, while Major Carr-Ellison went to command a Yeomanry Regiment under General Locke Elliot in the Orange River Colony. Col. Pulteney being sick in hospital, Lord Basing took over command of the column. On the following day we were suddenly ordered out on a night march, but after starting were recalled. News had been received apparently that

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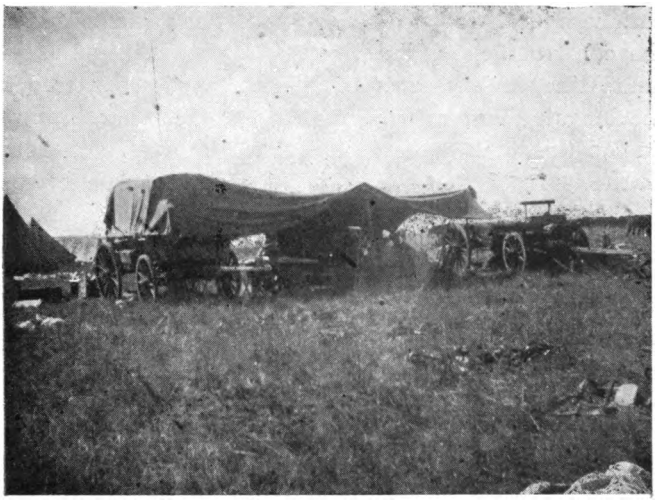
Jack Hinton, the notorious train wrecker, and Viljoen with a large party of Boers were only about ten miles away, but later news must have caused the counter-order.

Our wanderings during the above trek had not been very productive. The Drives had not yet been instituted, and it was impossible for columns wandering about with transport to cope with the mobile Boers, who appeared and disappeared as they liked. The Cavalry Brigade had



Officers Mess.

returned from the Komati with only one prisoner and twenty-five Burghers voluntarily surrendered. "The total gain of all these columns by the end of May (when we were at Tygerkloof), was but 142 Boers (of whom four were killed in action and 44 had voluntarily surrendered), some 270 wagons and carts, and some 36,000 head of stock; and both troops and commanders were mortified to discover how little their severe exertions were affecting the fortunes of the campaign." *

* Times History.

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We left Middelburg on July 8th under orders for Pretoria, the Scots Guards staying behind to go to Bloemfontein, while we took the Inniskillings and one section 66th Battery R.F.A. and pom-poms, along the line with us. We marched via Elandspruit, Uitspan, Balmoral, Klippeland, Kaalfontein, Hartebeest Poort, reaching Pretoria on the 14th. Here the Inniskillings left us to join Colonel Rimington's column at Heilbron. The regiment under Lt.-Colonel Lord Basing now became a small independent column, with orders to cover the construction of the Breeds Nek-Frederikstad blockhouse line, and we operated in the district bordered by the Magaliesberg on the north, the Klerksdorp railway line on the south and the line of blockhouses being built on the west. We left Pretoria, where we were encamped just south of the Potchefstroom road to the west of the town, on Tuesday, July 16th, and marched via Hoekplaats, Vlakfontein, Veromdraai, (near Krugersdorp), Vlakplaats, Elandsfontein, and reached Welverdiend on the 21st. On the 23rd the column marched to Witkoppies on the Mooi River and the following day made a reconnaissance towards Ventersdorp. The advance guard under McNeile saw two wagons in the distance and gave chase; but the small Boer escort fled after firing a few shots, and only the wagons were taken. That night a Kaffir came in to say that he had marked down 14 Boers about 14 miles off. Starting at 1.30 a.m. we surrounded a large wood, where they were said to be, before dawn, but they were not to be found, though the cover was well beaten. On the 26th we reconnoitred up the Mooi River and on to the Nauwpoort Road but saw nothing of the enemy, so camped at Klerks Kraal and then marched in to Welverdiend for supplies. On the morning of the 29th orders were received from Lord Kitchener to be at Hekpoort—about 30 miles off—on the 30th, so the column marched at midday for Holfontein, passing

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some caves, called King Solomon Mines (which tradition says, reach to Mafeking) and reached Holfontein after dark. Here the advance guard chased five Boers who were in a farm, but a large bog on the far side, and the darkness, saved them. On the following day we marched through Zeekerhoek, a nasty defile to Hekpoort, where we arrived in the evening, and got in touch with General Barton; only a few Boers were seen in the

Officers Mess and Bivouacks.

distance, who galloped away. On the 31st we moved six miles east to a camp opposite the entrance to Hekpoort, and close alongside Barton. On August 1st two squadrons under Rogers went to Vlakplaats near Krugersdorp for supplies; starting at 2 a.m. they took over the convoy, and leaving again at 8 p.m. were safely back in the evening. Again on the 2nd, reconnaissance was made north of the Magaliesberg down to Damhoek. There was a little sniping, and small parties of Boers were seen on the Berg; covered by this, Barton did some clearing.

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The next day a reconnaissance was made to Thorndale, but nothing was seen.

On August 4th we moved out towards the Magaliesberg to cover General Barton's convoy, which went down the valley to Rietfontein towards Pretoria to get supplies. There was no serious fighting, but a little sniping at forward patrols. Heavy artillery firing was heard towards Nauwpoort. On the following day the column moved off through Hekpoort for Krugersdorp to fill up, and halted at Dwarsvlei on the farther side of the Pass. In the afternoon we moved back on to the Witwatersberg, where we knew there were Boers. Innes-Ker with the advanced guard saw a fire in the rocks and galloped for it. There were ten Boers there who fired on him at close range, and disappeared amongst the rocks, the rest of the day was spent in hunting for them on foot as the country was quite unridable, and many men could easily hide in the kloofs without fear of discovery. On returning to camp, we found two prisoners had been taken by the outposts. The next day we marched to Krugersdorp and filled up. It was known that the columns under Colonels Allenby and Kekewich were to attack Breedt's Nek in the Magaliesberg on the 7th; we marched off early to a place called Stein Kopjes, close to Zeekerhoek, and to the south of the Witwatersberg in order to waylay any parties of Boers endeavouring to escape from the Magaliesberg. The baggage and convoy were to follow. Lord Basing arranged the troops in ambush at the various approaches by 9.30 a.m.

At about 2.30 p.m. a party of thirty Boers approached, and would have run right into us, but unluckily they had a concealed sentry on the Witwatersberg, who gave them the alarm by firing two shots, when they turned tail and fled. They were about 3000 yards off, and the pom-poms got a lot of shells away at them, but apparently did no damage. Two troops under Hamilton-Russell

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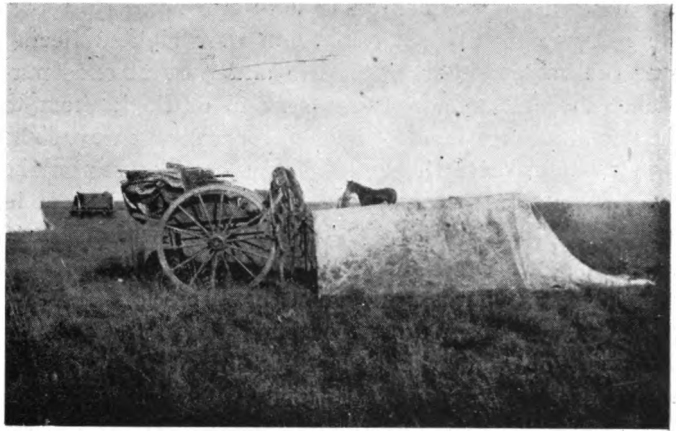
and Egerton pursued them for about eight miles, and captured about fifty head of cattle, which they were driving, and shooting their leader's (Piet Delarey) horse under him; but as the ground was very mountainous and steep, Captain Russell found himself at this point with only three men, and as the Boers numbered over thirty he was unable to follow them further. They thought they had shot the rider as well as the horse, as



Cape Cart and Bivouack.

he was seen to fall, but he had only crawled into the rocks, and we subsequently heard he was unwounded.

On the 8th Calvert started with "C" Squadron at 4 a.m. to pick up a convoy of empties from Nauwpoort, and escort them to Kaalfontein. McNeile with "A" Squadron took our full supply column at 5 a.m. to Breedts Nek, to ration the garrison left there, and the remainder marched to Kaalfontein. It was arranged that each party should start for Kaalfontein at 10 a.m., converging on it from the north, east, and west, as there was reason to believe that the Boers were laagered at

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Kosterfontein, about four miles north of Kaalfontein. Each squadron had a gun with it. Unluckily the Boers saw Calvert's squadron on its way out and fled, pursued by two troops under Godman, while Calvert brought in the convoy with the remainder. The Boers were pursued most of the day and marked down somewhere near Holfontein, five miles east of Koelfontein. Their cattle—about fifty head—were captured.

Basing determined to take up the pursuit next day, leaving a made-up squadron of the worst horses to escort the baggage to Vlakplaats. Boers were sighted fleeing over the veld west of Holfontein and were at once pursued. Rogers' squadron was sent to outflank them to the north, as they seemed inclined to turn that way. The object was to drive them against the blockhouses on the Mooi River about twenty miles to the west. We kept in touch with these all day, though never within three miles from them, till we got within five miles of the Mooi River at Klerkskraal, when they were lost. As they were last seen going in a southerly direction, it was thought they were trying to get round our left flank so after riding some time and trying to pick them up, the chase was abandoned. We heard afterwards that they had actually gone up to the blockhouses a little further south, but too far off to be damaged. We got back to Vlakplaats about 8 p.m., having covered fifty miles.

On the 10th the column rested at Vlakplaats while we filled up with supplies from Krugersdorp, and on the 11th we went to Holfontein to try and pick up the Boers, while the baggage went to Kaalfontein. A small party of Boers were seen who fled north, but had too much start to be pursued far. On the next day we reconnoitred in a northerly direction, whither the Boers had gone, towards Nutfontein, Rietfontein, and Hartebeestfontein, about ten miles south of Nauwpoort, but found no traces of them. There was also another column close by which

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we did not know of. We heard in the evening that Piet Delarey with about half his men had gone back to the Witwatersberg.

On August 13th three squadrons started at daylight to move as follows: Russel to Dwarsvlei, McNeile to a spot south of Stein Kopjes and Makins to a point north of Thorndale, while the baggage and a made-up squad-

Bivouack.

ron under Basing advanced direct on the Witwatersberg. Makins reached Zeekerhoek, and his advanced troop under Knowles met 20 Boers and gave chase. Knowles outpaced his men, and got so close that a Boer fired his rifle at him over his shoulder, and blew off Knowles' helmet. Leaving a troop in Zeekerhoek, Makins and Calvert took up the pursuit over very bad ground across the Hekpoort valley, then west past Breedts hill towards

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Olifants Nek, when darkness overtook them. It was a great hunt and the men went like a pack of hounds, but the Boers scattered eventually and beat us owing to their knowledge of the ground. However, we got three prisoners, and marked down several in the Witwatersberg. "C" Squadron had a big trek back with some shoeless horses, not knowing the whereabouts of the camp and in a terrific storm. A curious phenomenon of this storm, which was not noticed on any other occasion during the

Officers in guards van en route to Springfontein.
(Lieut. Tate, Major Carr-Ellison, Captain Steele, Lieut. Glyn).

war, was that after each flash a ball of blue light was visible over the horses heads and between their ears! Towards midnight, when it seemed hopeless to find the camp, word was passed up that a man and horse had disappeared down a well. The man was hauled out, not much the worse, but the horse was shot from the well top next morning. Luckily camp was discovered shortly afterwards.

On the following day one squadron went through

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Zeekerhoek to block the north side of the berg, and the remainder approached it from the south. Some men were dismounted at the top and the remainder then proceeded to search the deep kloof on foot, guided by one of the prisoners taken the day before. There were three of these kloofs which could only be entered at the top and bottom, with sheer cliffs on either side about fifty feet high and full of vegetation. The longest was about two miles, the others much shorter. McNeile took some men and walked down the longest one from the top. Pitt did the other two from the bottom. Eleven prisoners were captured, mostly in the longest one, and several horses. These were concealed in caves, some being almost buried. Large quantities of supplies and grain were found, and two stills for making spirits. We had fourteen prisoners by the evening. They were all armed and had plenty of ammunition.

On August 15th we got orders during the night by a native runner to return to Krugersdorp, where we arrived about midday. At 4.30 p.m. we got orders again from Lord Kitchener to go at once to Cape Colony. We started immediately, and entrained in four trains during the night, leaving our section of guns behind (66th Battery R.F.A.) The men were, as usual, packed in open trucks, while the officers had a guard's van.

On passing through Bloemfontein, Basing met General Sir Charles Knox, under whose orders we were now to serve, and was told that our destination was Springfontein in the South of the Orange River Colony.

We reached Springfontein on the night of the 17th and were ordered to detrain at once and march east; our object being, in conjunction with other columns, to prevent Kritzinger from returning to Cape Colony, which he had just left.

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PERIOD V.

General Smuts who had been leading a commando from the Transvaal down through the western side of the Orange River Colony, crossed the railway to the east, and set his face for Smithfield and Zastron on August 18th, meaning to go on to the Colony and foment the rebellion. At Zastron he found Kritzinger just escaped from Cape Colony. Kitchener now concentrated a number of columns in the south east corner of the Orange River Colony, of which we were one, and all these combined to deal with Smuts and Kritzinger and especially to forestall the former at the drifts on the Orange River. There was every prospect of success, and the preliminary movements of the various columns were all designed to convert the enemy's rendezvous into a veritable *cul-de-sac*.

"The whole success of the manoeuvre depended upon the eastern columns keeping out towards the Basuto border so as to be always outside the commandos, which were known to be concentrating about Zastron. These tactics the Commander-in-Chief, with a clearer eye to the situation than his subordinates on the spot, repeatedly enjoined from Pretoria. But the natural difficulty of organising quickly combined action for a special purpose among a number of separate units, always one of the nicest problems of the military art, was here doubled, first by the neglect to appoint a single and supreme commander on the scene of action, next by the clouds of vagrant Boers who floated around Smuts's place of concentration, and utterly obscured the main issue. Meeting the enemy everywhere, unable either to count them or discover any general aim to their movements,

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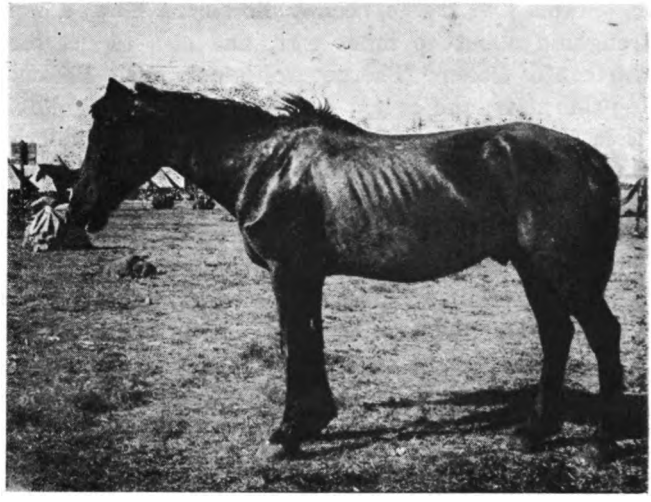
and lacking central control themselves, the column commanders could never be certain whether they had Smuts, Kritzinger or a mere field-cornet in front of them. That the Boer leaders had been marked down on a certain spot on a certain day, was of very little assistance; for this was warfare in which a report only a night old might be nearly a hundred miles wide of its reckoning.



A Typical Russian.

As a consequence, most of the columns so exhausted themselves with skirmishing, that at a critical moment they had to put in to the railway to refit, Sir H. Rawlinson to Edenburg, Thorneycroft to Aliwal North and Lord Basing to Springfontein, leaving Kritzinger to recruit and Smuts to collect his men and reconnoitre the Orange for a crossing place, in peace. Smuts misliking the appearance of the troops along the Orange made no movement."

We will now trace out the movements of our column.

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On August 18th we marched out of Springfontein at 9 a.m., with two guns of "R" Battery R.H.A. under Captain Herbert, which had joined us at Bloemfontein to replace our field guns left behind at Krugersdorp. One of the guns had a magnificent team of duns. We found the country full of stock, and reached Jackalsfontein about 14 miles away.

Two squadrons with two guns started early the following morning to try to occupy Boesmans Kop, a noted stronghold about 20 miles east, and also to get touch with one of Colonel Thorneycroft's columns. Boesmans Kop was clear, and only a few Boers were seen galloping off in the distance. The column camped at Kinderfontein (16 miles), and gained touch with Major Copeman, one of Thorneycroft's columns.

On the 20th "B" Squadron went off to Boesmans Kop to search it again, and the column marched to Pampasfontein (10 miles), 15 miles west of Smithfield. No Boers were seen, but touch was gained with Damant. The same evening we marched out at 8.30 p.m. to try and co-operate with Major Damant in surrounding a hill named Carmel where there was supposed to be a laager. We got this intelligence through a half-finished helio message from General Knox. We lined the west and north sides and waited for Damant's attack at dawn; but it never took place. We found Carmel unoccupied and returned to Pampasfontein. From the official history, however, Damant appears to have got nearly 100 prisoners, so our efforts in co-operation gave satisfying results.

The following morning we started at 4 a.m. and marched through Carmel to Karee Poort, a drift over the Caledon. Only about 14 Boers were seen on the far side of the river, who galloped off when we appeared. The column camped at Roosynpoort, and marched on to Slik Spruit (10 miles) next day, 10 miles east of Bethulie,

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where our base and General Knox were, and sent wagons in for supplies. The wagons returned the following afternoon.

On the 20th we marched 18 miles north east to Haasfontein, mending a broken telegraph line, having been supplied with a linesman and operator from Bethulie, and the next day the column marched towards the Groot Maasfontein mountains, 20 miles north west, which Damant (a Colonial Commander, in command of Colonial troops) was approaching from the north east. We found that the Boers had gone north east the previous evening. One of our native scouts was wounded by three Boers on his way back from Damant with a letter, but he arrived safely. We were at Klein Bloemfontein on the 27th and the following day marched to Blauwfontein (12 miles west) clearing the country but seeing no Boers.

On August 29th, we received orders to march back to Grijs Kop, near Carmel, to which point we had mended the telegraph wire, and to send our convoy direct to Bethulie to fill up and rejoin us, which it did on the 31st. Two dismounted Boers were caught during our march near the Tafelberg, but no others were seen. On the 31st we were ordered to march to Jurys Baken, five miles west of Rouxville (42 miles), in two marches via Smithfield, to take Colonel Thorneycroft's place there, he moving further east. No Boers were seen.

The Official History here says:—"On September 2nd Smuts was still north of the river, with Sir H. Rawlinson coming down upon him by Sweetwater, and Thorneycroft well placed to cut him off at Willemsfontein, south-east of Rouxville, where he had been since the day before, with Lord Basing on his left at Jurys Baken. But Thorneycroft came no further and Smuts saw that he must seize the opportunity. Bidding adieu to Kritzinger, who promised to follow him as soon as possible, he crept

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towards the river, and on the night of September 3rd crossed with nearly 500 men at a weak spot which he had discovered, namely, Kiba Drift, hard by the Basuto border. In timing his crossing his skill or fortune attained its climax. At that moment Hart... was loosening his watch on the river in order to throw troops across in the direction of Zastron. Most of his mobile units... were no further eastwards than the drift at Driefontein, on the northern side of which they were deploying prior to advancing, and to cover the tardy passage of their transport on the bad drifts behind. This was nearly completed when a second order was sent to Hart (September 3rd) forbidding him to leave the river; but it was then too late. His right flank was already turned and Smuts, appearing from a country which Thorneycroft had on that day reconnoitred and found clear as far as Elandskloof, i.e. twenty miles east of Rouxville, was over the river before Hart could recall and once more extend his troops. Now the invader had burnt his boats. Leaving the bevy of columns at a loss behind him, he penetrated into Cape Colony, braving one peril after another, and for many months after provided for the British province that most unhappy chapter in its history."...

"Thus vanished an opportunity as fair as had ever been offered of demolishing one of the main props of the Boer campaign. The British combination had signally, almost unaccountably failed. Allowing for all the difficulties of intelligence, communications, and the bewilderment of the Boer diversions, the task had been far more simple than many which had been carried to success by these very columns. Throughout his subsequent career of adventure Smuts was never to be in more danger than he had been at its onset, and his cautious tactics of the next few days show how thoroughly he was impressed by the narrowness of his escape. Yet it was not to be called an escape. If the Boer leader had shown his heels,

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it was not to avoid a superior opponent, but rather to invade his enemy's own territory. Throughout the campaign in South Africa there was scarcely a more striking feat of perseverance, daring and good fortune than Smuts' ride of 300 miles through one British army after another from the Gatrand up to and over the banks of the Orange."

Thus the Official History describes the conduct of the

Lieut. The Lord Charles Fitzmaurice.

operations. Kritzinger was still left to be dealt with. After this degression we must return to the doings of our column. On September 3rd we were ordered to escort a convoy from Aliwal North to join General Plumer at Smithfield. Leaving Aliwal on the 5th, it met Plumer, most opportunitely, as he was arriving at Smithfield on the 7th. The oxen were in a wretched condition, and it was only by getting some fresh oxen, and by borrowing some mule transport from our column, that the convoy was got through. "C" Squadron, under Cap-

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tain Makins performed this duty, and returned on the 9th and "B" Squadron under Hamilton Russell took the empty convoy into Aliwal North with our wagons to refill.

While this convoy work was going on, daily patrols consisting of a troop, went out very long distances, sometimes over 20 miles, making 40 miles altogether, but they reported the country clear.

On September 14th Hamilton Russell, with two days' supplies, started to clear the banks of the Caledon River north of Commissie Bridge. The weather had now broken and there was heavy rain for three days. The following day orders were received to march to Pampasfontein (about 43 miles west), on being relieved at Jurys Baken by Colonel Minchin, one of Thorneycrofts columns, who arrived late in the evening. We marched to Commissie Bridge the next morning under great transport difficulties owing to the heavy rain; here we joined up with Hamilton Russell, who had cleared a great deal of stock.

On the 17th the column arrived at Pampasfontein, somewhat late owing to the state of the roads, but luckily the rain now stopped. The following day the transport rested, and patrols were sent out. The next morning a convoy went into Bethulie to fill up, while "C" Squadron under Makins and "A" Squadron under McNeile, marched respectively to Karee Poort and Kopjefontein (near Smithfield) to drive the north bank of the Caledon from Boschpoort to Karee Poort—towards each other. The country was very mountainous and difficult. On completion of this duty the squadrons returned via Waterval the next day, having captured and brought in a good deal of stock, and seen and noticed places which Boers evidently frequented, and which were of great value to us afterwards.

The column meanwhile remained at Pampasfontein

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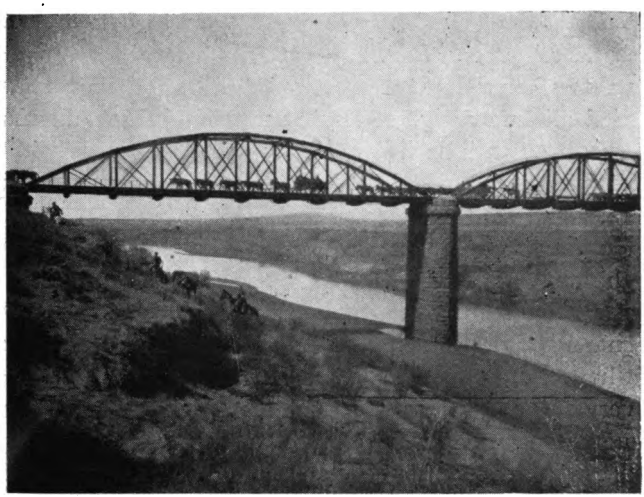
till the convoy came back on the 22nd, bringing with it Lieutenant Leighton, returned off leave, and a large draft of men and horses, which brought the strength of squadrons up to 193 each.

The next day we marched to Klipplatfontein, north of Smithfield, en route for De Rust. On the march a Boer family of nine were found lying hidden in a donga



Commissie Bridge. Caledon River.

near Hartebeestfontein. They were living in the donga altogether, and were grateful to us for removing them, and sending them to the refugee camp at Bethulie. We marched to De Rust (12 miles) further north towards Dewetsdorp. Lieut. Godman's troop was sent on early to Leeuwkop, where he met a party of Boers who fired on him; they departed when reinforcements arrived—too late to follow up effectively.

On the 25th Lieut. Sandbach, who was sent out with a troop on patrol to Jackalsfontein, met a party of about

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40 Boers near the Wilgeboom Spruit. He retired a short distance to a good position and opened fire, but they made off. On re-inforcements coming up they had quite disappeared, and were spoored across the Caledon.

On the 26th the column marched 30 miles to Pampasfontein, and on the next day the convoy went into Bethulie for supplies (26 miles). The same evening Captain Makins with "C" Squadron started off at 6 p.m. to raid the farms and laagers on both sides of the Caledon near Karee Poort, which he had noted previously. A farm was surrounded near Kletter drift, and the inmates denied all knowledge of any Boers, but in a small room at the back, a fine specimen was found in bed with a Boer maid, and on a further search a rifle and bandolier were found under the mattress.

He gave us information of four other Boers who were at the next farm down the river, so Lieut. Leighton was sent with his troop to catch them. The farm was surrounded, but unfortunately they were sleeping in an out-house and managed to escape. Makins went on into a very rough piece of country across the Caledon, and came on a place evidently much frequented by Boers and caught two more. On returning an unmarked drift was crossed, which was found to be a very useful piece of reconnaissance five days later. The squadron returned at 3.30 p.m. on the 28th, and the Boer captured at the farm gave good information, and from him we learnt that some Boers were to be at Traka Farm and Tafelberg near Commissie Bridge that evening: so McNeile was sent to the former place with two troops, and Hamilton Russell to the latter, also with two troops, both starting at 9.30 p.m. Early next morning a message came in from McNeile to say that he had come across a Boer laager in the dark at 3.30 a.m. and had caught Veldcornet du Toit and 6 Boers. It turned out that a commando under Joubert had laagered at 2 a.m. at

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Lichtenstein, October, 1901, The late Lieutenant M. Knowles with a patrol, all disguised as Boers setting out to try to capture two Boers who had been seen frequently observing the Camp. The names of those who can be distinguished in the picture are : Sergeants Cook, Kendon, Reimers, Mott; Corporal Fordom : Privates Payne, Russell, Baldock, Daw, Green, Kelly, Wilson, Woolnough, Lockwood, Bunker, Edgington, Nicholls, Foxon and Elder, Lieut. Knowles is the mounted figure in the foreground. The nondescript outfits were borrowed from the Kaffir transport drivers.

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Traka. On receiving the news the rest of the column turned out in support, and on reaching Traka, found Colonel Williams' column close by. We drove two more Boers into Williams' outposts and we picked up several ponies, saddles, blankets, rifles, and ammunition which the Boers had left in their escape in the dark. We encamped that evening at Kopjesfontein, having sent for a day's supplies from Pampasfontein, which reached us about 11 p.m.; the convoy had arrived there that afternoon, and we then marched to Klipplaatsfontein (9 miles) at 1 p.m. after giving Col. Williams two days' supplies.

On October 1st we rested and at Commissie Bridge, got into communication with Plumer, who was *en route* to Rouxville. The next day "A" Squadron with empty wagons was sent to meet Colonel Hamilton's column for the purpose of taking over a convoy from him, that he had been taking out to Williams; but we took it as we had already supplied Williams. The same evening at 9.30 p.m. the rest of the force moved out to ambush the drifts over the Caledon, from Commissie Bridge to Karee Poort, about 20 miles. "B" Squadron and guns under Major Rogers took the northern section, while Captain Makins took the southern with "C" Squadron, as he knew the country well. Plumer and Williams were to drive up towards us. On the northern section, nothing happened, but Makins was more successful to the south. Special attention was paid to the drift found five days previously, and having carefully posted most of the squadron here, a party of 25 Boers were seen approaching in the morning, with two scouts in front. The scouts came on watered their horses and crossed, and were neatly held up on our bank. The remainder came on, watered, and shouted to the scouts, but receiving no answer followed on, and when nearly all were across, fire was opened on them. They immediately were "hands-up," and 15 were caught; one was wounded and carried off,

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and the rest escaped. They turned out to belong to Reeder's commando. They said they thought their scouts were having a joke with them in not answering their shouts as they came to the drift.

No more Boers arrived after this, but a man who said he was a lost Yeoman was found wandering down to the drift, he was looked on with suspicion and escorted back with the prisoners. The camp was a long way off and not reached till 8 p.m. on Oct. 3rd. There had been apparently a big concentration

"C" Squadron Camp at Lichtenstein.

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meditated by the Boers, which our lucky attack on the night of the 29th had somewhat helped to prevent. Success sometimes rests on slender threads, and all of ours was really due to catching the Boer in bed at Kletter drift on the 28th September.

As has been recounted, Smuts had crossed the Orange river on September 3rd but Kritzinger was still within the fence. The only sign of Kritzinger's presence had been when he attempted to follow Smuts across the Orange on the night of September 19th. He had made a fierce and successful attack on one of Hart's posts at Quaggafontein. Although successful, Kritzinger had hesitated for some unaccountable reason from pushing on into Cape Colony to join Smuts, and returned to the Rouxville area "electing rather to endure in his own districts the unknown, and so far not too pressing ills, which might beset him, than those of which he had had full experience. As he was returning to his so far undiscovered sanctuary north of Vecht Kop, he was discovered on the evening of the 20th by Thorneycroft, and was immediately attacked with vigour and his commando broken up, part flying towards Vecht Kop, part towards Zastron. The gun which he had taken the day before was recaptured with some of his men. He then remained quiet till he dashed across Sand drift on December the 14th with 110 men, only to be wounded and caught two days later, while attempting to cross the line between Hanover Road and Fransman Kop."

"The situation in the South-Eastern corner of the Orange River Colony at the end of September 1901, was then as follows: the double failure against Smuts and Kritzinger had left all the columns in the district busily and not fruitlessly, engaged, it is true, but without any real object. It was not long before the operations here took a fresh shape."

The continually disturbed state of the area bounded by

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the Orange river, the railway, the Basuto border, and the Bloemfontein-Thabanchu-Ladybrand blockhouses, that is, the south-eastern corner of the Orange River Colony, now caused the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate fresh measures for its subjugation. Combination of troops, "drives" and raids, had all alike failed to free this district, a part the more important because it gave access to

English Hunter.

the main passages into Cape Colony. Abandoning the principle of moving columns, therefore, Lord Kitchener now ordered an assignment of fixed areas to the several columns within the zone, each column to be made responsible for the complete clearance of "the enemy as well as every living creature" from the country within its allotted section. "In compliance with his scheme a number of columns drawn from Sir Charles Knox and

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Rochfort (late Bruce Hamilton) were at once centered as follows:—Du Moulin at Ventershoek, Lowry Cole at Jammersberg Bridge, Bogle Smith at Schanskopje on the Kaffir river, Major A. C. Hamilton at Kransfontein, Lord Basing at Humans Rust, Minchin and Copeman, Thorneycrofts two wing commanders, at Elands Berg and Vecht Kop, Western at Zandfontein, North of Aliwal North, Taylor and Lean, the leaders of Pilcher's units, at Wolve Kop and Pampasfontein respectively. All were placed under the general command of Lieut.-General Sir C. Tucker, who controlled also the South African Constabulary posts along the line Kaffir River-Dewetsdorp-Wepener. Space fails to deal in detail with the doings of each and all of this assembly during the ensuing two months. There was never a moment's cessation of activity, never a day without fighting. In this district, scoured a hundred times as it had been, every column found an enemy, and, sometimes alone, sometimes in combination with a neighbour, carried out schemes so numerous and varied, evolved with so much care, and production of so much labour, that there, as in too many other portions of this history, a paragraph must do scant justice to what would adequately fill a volume. That the enemy survived all the narrow instertices between the evolving bodies of troops, was striking evidence of his extraordinary military qualities. But he did more; he was as ready as ever to take the offensive, to deal prompt justice upon the momentary lapse on the part of a column commander. As late as October 26th when scarcely a yard of this region had been left unswept, a detachment of 200 men wandering too far afield at Klein Zevenfontein, North-West of Smithfield, found itself in extreme danger from a commando, double its strength, which charged into within fifty paces of camp, killing an officer, wounding ten men and destroying most of the horses."

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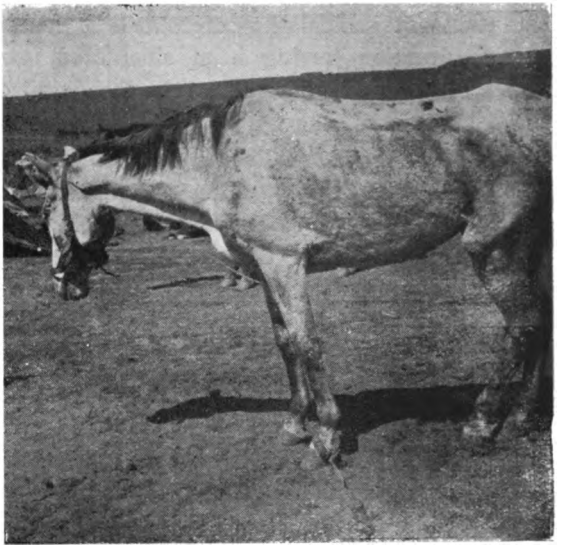
"We have not space to quote the other and numerous instances of the same sort. The Boers had a position adapted for disappearing and re-appearing in sufficent numbers to sometimes overwhelm a small column, or deliver a very damaging attack. The Boers knew well which columns gave them their best chances, and they had a wholesome respect for us, as we found difficulty in



An American Remount.

coming across them. Nevertheless, the fair balance was against the enemy. By the end of November two thirds of their armed strength had been removed by death or capture; their most secret storehouses had been ransacked, sufficient wheat being found concealed in false ceilings and by false walls to feed the Boer farms in the district for years; and scarcely a head of stock remained alive between Dewetsdorp and Aliwal North. The system, in

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short, proved more successful than any which had yet been attempted; and if its profits appear trifling in comparison with its enormous expenditure, such must always be the case, where a nation of armed nomads, for such the Boers had now become, challenges its opponent to extermination."

We have quoted rather fully from the Official History, as it puts authoritatively and well the state of things with which the regiment was called upon to deal at this period. The general situation having been elucidated, we will now hark back, and go once more into the detail of the regiment's movements.

On October the 4th Lord Basing went to see General Pilcher at Commissie Bridge, which he had just reached, and the column marched to Dehoop (8 miles) about 10 miles north of Smithfield. There were Boers on the Hautberg not far off, but out of our section across the Caledon, and which it was hoped Colonel Thorneycroft would attack in the morning as they were in an exhausted condition, and were evidently the rest of Reeder's Commando. They were being watched by Plumer.

Captain McNeile with "A" Squadron and a pom-pom started of at daybreak on the 5th to co-operate with Thorneycroft if attacking Hautberg, but McNeile saw his column move off east as he got near, so evidently Boer spoor had been found and they had quitted Hautberg during the night. We were now given a definite district to clear, and were not to be always marching backwards and forwards for supplies, which were 50 or 60 miles away, but were to halt 21 days in an entrenched camp near Humans Rust and work from there. The district was about 30 miles long by 15 broad, along the right bank of the Caledon from Bastards drift, 15 miles south of Wepener to Commissie Bridge and bounded on the west by the Dewetsdorp road. We were to com-

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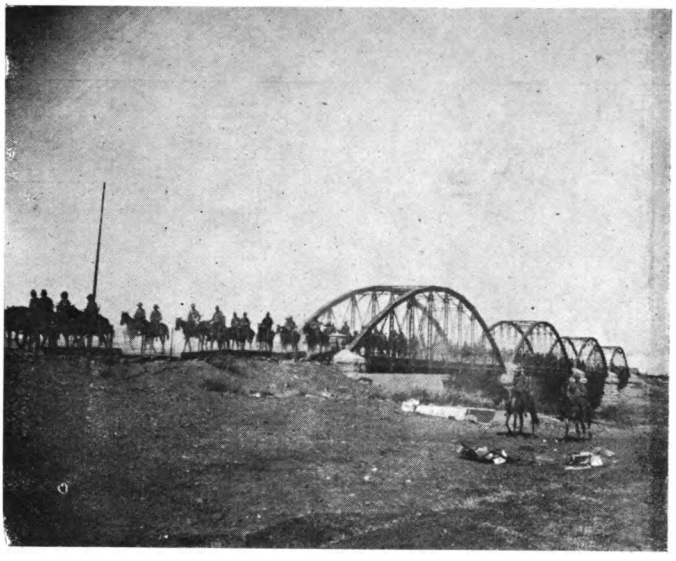
pletely clear this of every living thing, beginning from the southern end.

"A" Squadron under Mc Neile went off at 4.30 a.m. on the 6th together with a troop of "B" Squadron under Egerton (the remainder of "B" had gone into Bethulie for supplies), to search the kloofs under Barnets Kop. They found several lairs and destroyed a good deal of



Commissie Bridge. Caledon River.

grain, clothing and bedding, but found no Boers. Hamilton Russell got a solitary prisoner on his march near Dripfontein.

The 8th and 9th were occupied in clearing the southern portion of the district very thoroughly, and 3,000 sheep were destroyed.

On the 10th Hamilton Russell returned with the convoy, and at 9 p.m. Rogers with "A" and "C" Squadrons

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went to search the farms in the Wilgeboom valley, which it was thought might be occupied, while the rest of the column and convoy marched the following morning early. It was a very dark night, raining, and with no moon, but they managed to find and search the farms, which proved unoccupied. They then surrounded the Boer Hospital at Wessels Rust, and found it to be properly equipped and conducted. It contained four patients, with a proper staff of nurses and doctors, and was managed by an American named O'Donell. It was left unmolested and Lord Basing wired in for instructions, O'Donell giving his written guarantee not to move.

We now camped at Lichtenstein, near Humans Rust and put our camp in a state of defence, and on the 14th Makins with "C" Squadron went into Pampasfontein for supplies.

On the 13th October the column paraded at 5 a.m. to block the crossings of the Caledon from Bastards Drift to Makari. Shortly after reaching position, a commando was seen approaching Bastards Drift, preceeded by two men as scouts. Unfortunately fire was opened on these men, one of whom was killed and the other wounded and captured, but the main body escaped. Lower down the river "A" Squadron under McNeile captured three Boers, two of whom they also wounded.

On the 15th Hamilton Russell went with "B" Squadron to De Wet's Mill on the Caledon near Mokari drift about 15 miles off, to clear and destroy it. No Boers were seen and the mill-wheel was blown up. As Colonel Thorneycroft had followed up the commando, which we met at Bastards Drift on the 13th, down the Caledon as far as Hautberg near Commissie Bridge, McNeile with "A" Squadron went towards Klipplaatfontein after dark in the hope of intercepting them. The next morning at daybreak the rest of the column moved off to De Rust. A few odd Boers were seen moving west, but too far

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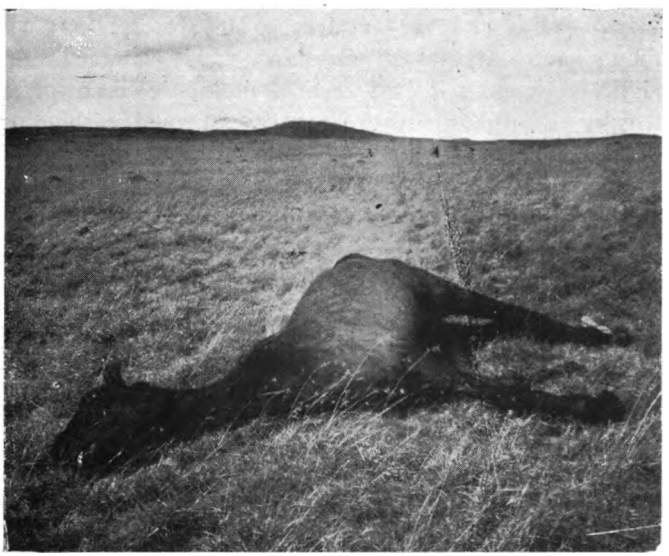
off to catch, though we tried; one of them was seen to light the veldt as he rode away. At Franskraal "A" Squadron joined the returning convoy; "C" Squadron had seen the commando moving west quite early that morning across their front. The commando might have given "C" Squadron a really warm time.

The convoy safely retired the following day, and the telegraph section was sent across the Caledon to join



"Sic Transit."

Colonel Thorneycroft, who took it over at Mokari drift. The next day "A" Squadron started off again with the convoy to Pampasfontein. The same day the wire was cut, so Hamilton Russel went off at 2 a.m. on the 19th to mend it. It was found burned in one place, and was replaced, but on returning it was discovered cut further on, so it was not repaired that day.

At 5 a.m. on the 20th a runner, returning from Pam-

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pasfontein, reported that he had seen a small commando near Middelburg Farm, about ten miles south on the way to Smithfield. He was bringing news of a patrol of Colonel Lean's being captured at Snymans Poort. We started at once for Winkle Kop. Makins with "C" Squadron went on towards Smithfield and mended the wire near Klipplaatfontein. The Boers were spoored north west, but were not seen. "B" Squadron went to meet the convoy and protect it, as the Boers being now in larger bodies and very active, a large escort was considered necessary. "C" Squadron was also sent that night to lie near it at Izervarkfontein, in case of an attack. The next day the convoy returned without incident.

On the 23rd "A" and "C" Squadrons under Major Rogers turned out at mid-night, with two days' supplies, and went to Vaalspruit farm about 12 miles off, and north of the camp, in order to lie up and intercept any movement to or from Bastards Drift.

At about 5 p.m. the next evening Lord Basing got a telegram from Colonel Lean saying that about 150 of his men under Major Hallard were being attacked and heavily engaged near Klein Zevenfontein, about 18 miles west, and wanted help. "B" Sqdn. under Hamilton Russell were immediately sent off, with the pompom, as fast as they could go. Lean had, however, relieved this party himself about 7 p.m., so when Hamilton Russell arrived all was quiet. Meanwhile the other two squadrons moved across on to Jakhalsfontein, about 7 miles west of camp, and in sight of Klein Zevenfontein. Russell laagered at Izervarkfontein and all returned the following day, the 25th and rested on the 26th.

Makins with "C" Squadron went out to Vaalspruit next day to bring in some wheat he had found hidden there. Two waggon loads were brought back and as much more destroyed.

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On the 28th the convoy escorted by "A" and "B" Squadrons and the guns under Major Rogers, left at 5 p.m. for Izervarkfontein, being joined the following morning by "C" Squadron. After seeing the convoy over the dangerous ground, all but "B" Squadron withdrew to Izervarkfontein. The following morning we turned out to meet the returning convoy and met Colonel Western's

Captain R. Burns.

column with Driscoll's Scouts (700 strong) at Franskraal, moving north, (Lieut. R. B. Webb, who had been an officer in the regiment, was with them). We camped at Izervarkfontein again that night, and returned next day, during a bad thunderstorm, to camp. Fifty-two remounts joined with the convoy.

On the 31st a troop of "C" Squadron went to Jak-

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halsfontein to get touch with Colonel Western at Koppies-kraal, which it did.

On November 1st "C" Squadron under Makins went off to bring in some hidden wheat which he had found at Mentors Kraal, near Mokari drift, and returned with seven wagon loads. It had been very cunningly walled up in the centre of the farm, and it was only by pacing the outside wall and then comparing it with the inner structure, that the secret store was found.

The next day as the Caledon river was high, Lord Basing took the opportunity of sending "A" and "B" Squadrons under Major Rogers at 2 p.m. to surround and search Burnets Kop, which used to be a stronghold. It was found to be unoccupied, but three Boers were seen lower down the river, too far off to catch, though an attempt was made to cut them off. The telegraph was cut that night.

On the 3rd the three squadrons with guns went with the convoy to Izervarkfontein, parading at 12.30 p.m., and sendng a troop under Lieut. Hon. W. E. Egerton to repair the wire, which was usually cut about 20 miles away. The following day "C" went on with the convoy to Pampasfontein, with "A" and "B" Squadrons and guns escorting them as far as Diepfontein. Next morning at 5-30 p.m. the outposts at Izervarkfontein, reported 30 or 40 Boers near the camp. Lord Basing at once sent out Captain Hamilton Russell with two troops in pursuit. He chased them for about 10 miles capturing some of their horses, of which they had two apiece. The convoy returned to Izervarkfontein.

On November the 6th the whole party returned to Lichtenstein with the convoy, and the next day "A" and "B" Squadrons paraded at 4-30 p.m. but were recalled to camp, owing to orders being received from General Knox to be in readiness for a combined move-

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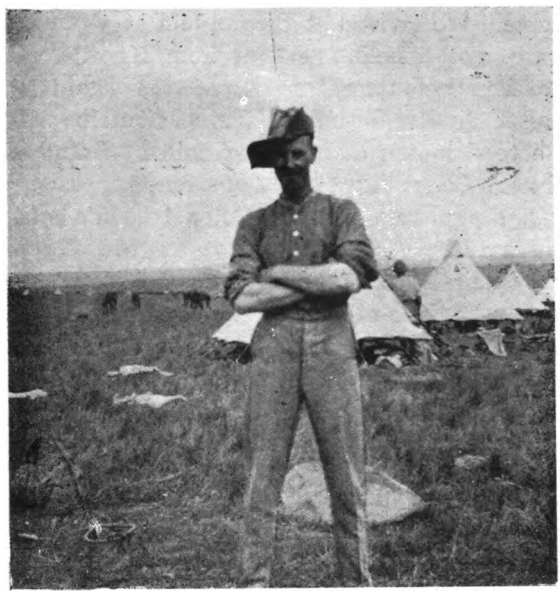
ment. We "stood to" for the next two days but nothing happened.

On the 10th "A" and "B" Squadrons under Rogers went out at 4-30 p.m. to lie up, and searched the country round Roodepoort, working towards and in combination with "C" Squadron under Makins, who started at



Captain E. Makins.

3 a.m. the following morning, about 10 miles east of them. "C" Squadron destroyed fifty 200 lb. sacks of wheat, and 18 horses were brought in. The columns of Colonels Western and De Moulins were seen about eight miles to the west. The telegraph wire was cut again in the evening, therefore, the following day, Makins with "C" and "B" Squadrons was sent to repair it, also to

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try and corroborate Colonel Lean's story that 80 Boers were living in our section. The line was mended, but no Boers were found to vindicate the canard. General Knox sent orders for us to hold ourselves in readiness for a move.

On November 13th all three squadrons and the R.H.A. Section were detailed as escort to the convoy, as Commandant Brand was reported moving about in considerable force. We arrived at Diepfontein at 3 p.m., and at 5-30 p.m. got a helio message from Knox, "Move at once to Pampasfontein," so we started again at 7-30 p.m. after dinner, reaching Pampasfontein at 9-30 p.m., a total march of nearly 40 miles. Brand was reported near Deput, west of Pampasfontein, so we moved out at 4-30 p.m. reinforced by Colonel Lean's column, to try and cut them off from going south. We reached Palmietfontein about 11 p.m. with two days' supplies. It was a very dark night, and we found afterwards that we had actually camped within a mile of Brand. Early next morning, we moved on Deput, a mountainous piece of country, finding that the Boers had moved north west during the night. We met Colonel Western's column there, who was coming south in pursuit. He followed the spoor and we moved to Klein Bloemfontein, returning in the evening to Pampasfontein about 7-30 p.m. The Boers under Brand, about 300 in number, had been marching the same night as ourselves, and were about two hours in front of us. They turned north west, otherwise they would have run right into us, but we found where they had laagered and easily spoored them.

On the 10th idem, we filled up at Pampasfontein and got back as far as Diepfontein, returning to Lichtenstein next day. We saw a few Boers on our right flank at Leeuwkop, but they kept quiet. Colonel Pilcher was close behind us with his column.

On the 18th "A" and "B" Squadrons with the

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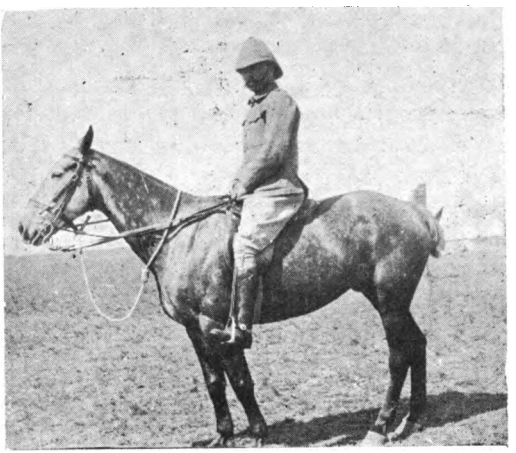
pom-poms started off on a night march, but were recalled after going about five miles, as a message came from General Knox, that we should be required elsewhere. As a telegram came from Colonel Thorneycroft, saying that Boers had been seen at Mentors Kraal about 12 miles away on the Caledon that evening, Makins was sent off with "C" Squadron at midnight. He came back next morning with 100 sheep, having surrounded the farm during the night, but there were no Boers. It trans-



Lieut. and Quartermaster F. Burch.

pired that Thorneycroft had mistaken the farm where the Boers had been, but he caught them next morning at Bastards Drift. "A" and "B" Squadrons with the pom-pom under Rogers went out at 11 p.m. to Smithfield for two nights, to work in co-operation with some movement near Karee Poort. "C" Squadron started at 5-30 a.m. the next morning to join the other two squadrons, taking supplies with them. On the 21st the three squadrons and pom-poms returned having seen no Boers at all, and the whole column rested the following day.

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On the 23rd "B" and "C" Squadrons took the convoy into Pampasfontein to fill up. Private Plumb died of enteric fever and was buried at Lichtenstein farm; he had been nursed devotedly at the Boer Hospital at Wessels Rust by the Dutch nurses. The convoy returned safely the next day, and again on the following night "A" Squadron under McNeile went off to surround Lessens Kop about 12 or 14 miles away. Some Boers were found at home at last, and Commandant Joubert with Veldtcornet Wolmarans (his staff officer) and four men were captured. Joubert who was the most important man, after Brand, in our district, was severely wounded through the stomach while trying to escape.

The same day "B" and "C" Squadrons under Rogers went out at 10-30 p.m. to surround Burnets Kop. Lord Basing tried to get another column to surround Amsterdam at the same time, as it was impossible to say in which place the Boers were hiding. We found none at Burnets Kop, but Pilcher caught some near Amsterdam next day, more would probably have been caught had the movement been simultaneous. "B" and "C" Squadrons returned on the 27th without success.

On November 28th "A" Squadron with the troops of "B" escorted our prisoners to Izervarkfontein and handed them over to Colonel Pilcher there. "C" Squadron with 100 dismounted men and pom-pom went to Mokari drift on the Caledon to lie up, as Kritzinger was reported moving south from Thabanchu, and it was a favourite spot of his. The next night supplies were sent out to "C" Squadron escorted by two troops of "B" Squadron. Private Green and two black boys were also sent to take a message from General Knox to Colonel Western. Colonel Western had gone, but there were five men there, and the black boys bolted at once crying "Dutchman," but Private Green challenged them in case they might have been some of Western's men. They imme-

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diately tried to catch him, but he fired his revolver and cleverly escaped them. He behaved very pluckily and remained out till daylight, and had another look for Western but failed to find him.

The next evening a troop of "A" Squadron left camp at 5-45 p.m. to meet empty wagons coming from Mokari drift, but missed them in the dark, so "C" had to bring

Captains H. D. McNeile and G. F. Steele.

them right in, and remained at Head Quarters. "A" Squadron went out at 11 p.m. to surround Lessens Kop again, but returned the following morning (December 1st) without any success. "B" Squadron took the convoy into Pampasfontein that day, and Major Rogers left the Regiment with the convoy, on his way home, and did not return again, sending in his papers.

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The next day "C" Squadron returned from Mokari, no Boers had come their way at all. As horse sickness had now broken out badly, the camp at Lichtenstein was moved to the top of the hill. One Troop of "A" Squadron went to Burnets Kop the following morning, at daybreak, co-operating with Thorneycroft. Pilcher's scouts were there, but no Boers were seen. The convoy returned safely.

On the 4th "C" Squadron was despatched at 10-30 a.m. on news coming in from Pilcher that he was driving some Boers from Amsterdam towards Burnets Kop, but the Boers had gone west during the night. "B" Squadron under Hamilton Russell was sent off to Driekop at midnight to search the farms and kloofs there, returning on the 5th without result.

On the 6th "A" Squadron and two troops of "C" under McNeile started for Leeuwkop at 3 p.m., about 15 miles off, to draw some well known hiding places and stop any movement from the west, where Brand was reported. On the 7th Private Lamble died of enteric, and was buried next to Private Plumb.

On the 8th Hamilton Russell went off to Lessens Kop at 11-30 p.m.

The next day "B" Squadron caught a so-called Boer doctor and his assistant under suspicious circumstances, so they were sent into Bethulie in order to keep them from warning the Boers. "A" Squadron and the two troops of "C" returned to camp, having made several night marches to likely spots, but finding nothing. The two other troops of "C" took supplies out to "B" Squadron. Next morning "A" Squadron took the convoy into Pampasfontein, and "B" Squadron and two troops of "C" returned having seen nothing further. Private Farrington was dangerously wounded, accidentally, on the way back.

On December 12th "C" Squadron went to Amsterdam

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at 5-30 a.m. being joined by Captain Calvert and 20 men from the convoy. This was the beginning of our move northwards, leaving the district which we had been clearing. "C" Squadron's business was to search the right bank of the Caledon river up to Jammersberg drift, moving parallel to the main body of the column. The convoy returned with Major Carr Ellison, who had rejoined to fill Major Rogers place. Captain Pitt also re-

Captain H. D. McNeile and Lieut. Colonel The Lord Basing.

joined off sick leave. Two Boers surrendered to our outposts, probably driven in by hunger. Next day the telegraph cable was rolled up and three days supplies were sent to "C" Squadron at Arcadia.

On the 14th the column marched to Washbank (12 miles. Lieut. Knowles with a troop of "C" Squadron caught four Boers after an exciting chase and the sqdn. camped at Driekop. The force moved forward next day to Reitspruit (15 miles) in tropical weather, "C" Squadron capturing 150 sheep, and camped at Grootham. The

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following day the column moved on to Driefontein and "C" Squadron joined it there. The march was then continued to Rietfontein (10 miles) and we camped at Naoanyana, which is just at the eastern corner of the Thabanchu mountain, and moved camp again on the next day to Springhaans Nek in order to get water.

The column remained at Springhaans Nek for three days, from December 20th to 22nd, awaiting remounts and supplies.

On Monday December 23rd the column marched along the Thabanchu Line to Klipnell, a distance of 16 miles, and next day to Ladybrand (20 miles), close to the Basutoland Border, where we received orders to proceed, the following day, to Clocolan (23 miles) in order to join Colonel Ternan's Column(Ternan had just relieved Thornycroft). So on Christmas day our column moved off at 5.30 a.m., chasing some Boer patrols on the way but they saw us from a long way off and disappeared. We outspanned at Kilmarnock, reaching our destination at 4 p.m., "C" Squadron going out at 8.30 p.m. to hold Clocolan Hill.

Many Boers were reported to be in this district, which was very different country to that round Lichtenstein, being very hilly. The hills are 100 to 200 feet above the surrounding country, with absolutely precipitous sides of sheer rock and with large flat plateaux on the top, some square miles in extent and only approachable by very few tracks. On the eastern side are the mountains called the Wittebergen. The district was the chief corn growing part of the Orange River Colony and a good deal of it had been cultivated by the Boers, who used it as their chief food depot, buying groceries from the Basutos.

The next morning "A" Squadron started clearing the southern part of our district on the Basuto border. They collected and destroyed a good deal of grain, but saw no Boers. At Midnight on the 27th "B" and "C" Squad-

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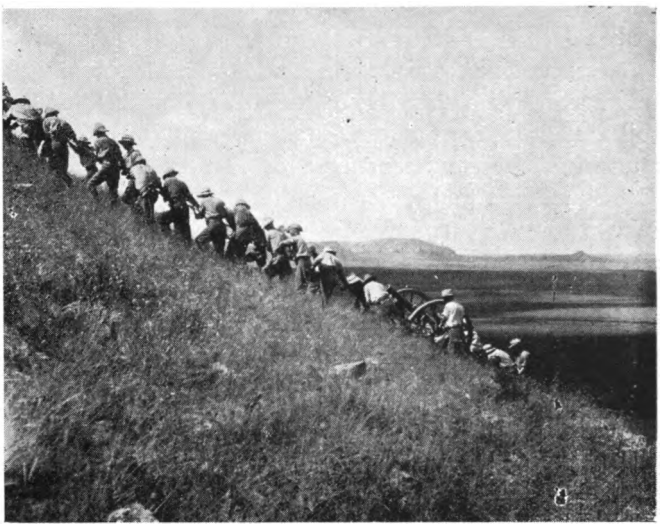
rons started to round up some farms towards Hermitage (north) in co-operation with Ternan. We met no Boers, but at 5 a.m. the T.M.I. were sniped at, and pursued some Boers who were seen to gallop out of a farm. Directly afterwards about 100 Boers were seen moving along a



Hauling gun up Spitz Kop.

deep valley about four miles off to the west, at a place called Pera. Ternan only allowed us to send one Squadron and "C" Squadron under Capt Calvert was selected. He galloped to cut them off, but was unable to do so as they reached a position in time. He then made a dashing attack upon them, driving them out and capturing three prisoners. He pursued them up into the mountains, driving them out of two more positions, but the kloof got narrower and they were on higher ground so he wisely gave it up and returned. Had another squadron accom-

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panied him it would have made a great difference. It was a dashing and clever manoeuvre, and reflected the greatest credit on Capt. Calvert and the Squadron. We then went into camp with Ternan's columns at Spitz Kop, about 18 miles N.W. of Ficksburg, and fortified the camp.

On the 28th the convoy with escort of T.M.I. under Minchin went into Ficksburg and laid a telegraph cable, as our wire to Ladybrand was cut. The whole of the next day we spent in fortifying the camp and surrounding it with barbed wire entanglements. On the 30th "A" and "B" Squadrons started at 3.0 a.m. to bring in the convoy, returning at 10 p.m., and on New Years' Eve "B" and "C" Squadrons under Lord Basing started at 11 p.m. to make a long night march in co-operation with Ternan, to surround Groenvlei Farm near Wonderkop. The Boers, however, had all left, probably warned by natives whom we intended to clear also. We returned about 9.0 a.m.

On January 2nd Leighton went into Ficksburg with a convoy, as we were laying in supplies for 30 days. The next morning at 12.30 a.m. "A" Squadron went out to Clocolan to lay up, while Minchin beat the Prynsberg woods, where some Boers had been seen, but the expedition was unproductive and they returned at midday. "C" Squadron returned at 8.30 a.m. from Ficksburg and sent out a troop in the afternoon to collect a large quantity of supplies.

"A" and "B" Squadrons spent the next day in clearing the country between Prynsburg and Basutoland, bringing in four waggon loads of grain. That evening "C" Squadron went out at 11 p.m. to co-operate with Ternan in an attack on the Rheboksberg. A good many Boers were seen, but unfortunately the kloof was insufficiently blocked and they got away. "C" Squadron returned at 2 p.m. the next day.

About 9.30 a.m. on the 6th some men came galloping in to say that some Boers had come down from Lots Pil-

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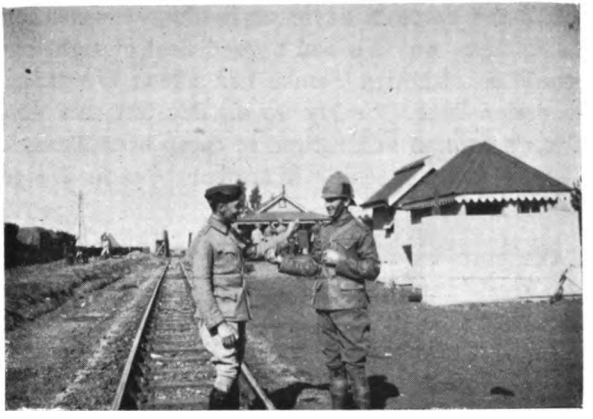
far (near Wonderkop) and caught one of our Scotch Carts which was out getting some trek gear about 5 miles off. "C" Squadron went off, followed at once by "A" in the hope of getting it back. "B" Squadron was met with great opposition and was fired on from three sides. One troop under Egerton was opposed on a hill and could not get up. (Tweefontein 219). With "A" Squadron's support the Boers were driven back. L./Cpl. Blackstone and Privates Plumb, Poulter and Sandey were severely wounded



Lieut. W. D. Grant.

and Pte. Hamilton slightly. Lieutenant Egerton and Sergt. Collier were both mentioned in the report of this affair for specially good work.

On the 7th, "C" Squadron escorted the Telegraph cart to mend the cable to Clocolan. Communication was established, but the wire was cut again almost immediately. Major Kenna's column passed by us and brought out a draft consisting of 2nd Lieuts. Tomkinson, Tidswell and Irwin, and 129 N.C.O.'s and Men and 147 horses which brought the strength of the Regiment up to 630 men and

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640 horses. Next morning the convoy went into Ficksburg with "A" and "B" Squadrons, and returned early on the 9th having left Ficksburg at 11 p.m. the previous night. Bulfin's column arrived at Spitz Kop. In the evening at 8 p.m. Lord Basing took all three squadrons, (510 all ranks), 2 guns and the pompom, and marched to Doornboom (200) a distance of about 20 miles, acting in co-operation with Ternan, with the object of lying up while Barker's column moved towards us. At 4 a.m. we ran into a Boer outpost, which fired at us and then bolted. We found the Boers at daybreak holding the position we wished to take up. We had a good deal of fighting but no casualities, although Ternan had a few. We picked up one wounded Boer. We lay up all day but saw no sign of Barker's column and retired to camp near Hammonia, at Fairview (268), reaching it at about 5 p.m. We rested on the 11th.

On the 12th we separated from Ternan, seeing him first to Roodekranz (144) and then marching to Van de Venter's Nek (88). "C" Squadron cleared Arcadia (209). A section of the 76th Bty., R.F.A. joined us here in place of the Section of "B" Bty. R.H.A. who had left us on the 8th inst. The following day "B" Squadron went out at 1.30 a.m. to occupy a hill protecting "A" Squadron, while they cleared Frans Hoek in the Wittebergen. No Boers were seen and on the next day again "C" Squadron and a troop of "A" finished clearing Franz Hoek. Captain Calvert fell ill with an attack of dysentry that night.

On the 15th we moved into Ficksburg, clearing as we went, and brought in about 14 wagon loads of grain. Lieutenants Ripley and Knowles both went into Hospital there with attacks of fever. We filled up with supplies and marched at 3 p.m. the next day and encamped at Grootvlei, a distance of 18 miles, to assist Bulfin, who

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was escorting a convoy to Ternan. The following day we marched at 7 a.m. in advance of Bulfin's column and encamped close by him at Helderfontein about 10 miles south of Ternan, who was almost constantly engaged. (The Boers seemed to enjoy tackling Ternan). On the 18th we escorted Bulfin to Bezuidenhout's Kraal where Ternan was. The convoy was under considerable fire all the way, but eventually arrived safely. The next day

Captain T. M. S. Pitt.

was spent in arranging with Ternan about an attack, which he contemplated. On the 20th "A" Squadron and the pompon left at 1.30 a.m. to join Bulfin and Ternan in their attack on Petersdal. Lord Basing took "B" and half of "C" Squadron and 2 guns to Klipfontein mountains at 2 a.m. This place commanded Moolman's Hoek, a likely spot for the Boers to go for if pressed, and it

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also protected our camp at Helderfontein. We saw a lot of Boers on the tops of the Wittebergen, but they were not pressed. Ternan had some sharp fighting, but without much result and we returned at 6.30 p.m. except "A" Squadron, which remained for the night at Bulfin's camp.

We marched to Fairview near Hammonia next day where "A" Squadron rejoined the column. The convoy went into Ficksburg on the Wednesday with Bulfin, in heavy rain. The following morning "A" Squadron went out at 2 a.m. to try to catch a Boer Patrol near Wonderkop. The patrol was seen but unluckily a man fired, and they took fright and escaped The convoy returned from Ficksburg. The weather was still very wet.

On January 25th "B" Squadron started at 1.30 a.m. to try and surround a Laager that one of our native despatch riders had run into earlier in the evening. They found the Laager near Kaffir Kraal, about 15 miles north of us, but while rounding it up were themselves attacked by a superior force of Boers, who came down from the Wittebergen. They were not in a good position and had to fight their way down the hill, which was the usual precipice. "A" Squadron started at 5 a.m. to assist them, and found them engaged on the top of the hill. "B" Squadron retired on "A", but missed one Troop that was below and to the flank. This troop under Egerton heard the firing and scaled the hill to reinforce, just as the Squadron came down, thus being exposed to the whole force of the Boers. Pte. J. Tynan was killed, Egerton was severely wonded together with Sergt. W. Glover and Pte. L. Mann, while Pte. A. Hadfield was slightly wounded and taken prisoner, but returned. One Boer was killed and two captured and they admitted to losing five. Most of the troop's horses got away, and the squadrons returned to camp at 7 p.m. It rained hard all day but cleared up next morning, when "A" and "C" Squadrons, under Major Carr-Ellison went out at 9.30 a.m. to co-operate

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wih Bulfin in an attack on Peru. Lord Basing turned out at 5 a.m. with "B" Squadron, and the pompom to secure their retreat.

Captain T. M. S. Pitt and the Hon. A. Hamilton-Russell.

The operations were, however, unproductive, as the Laager had moved further north, and higher up the kloof during the night of the 25th. At daybreak we saw a large commando of Boers (about 400) with wagons and

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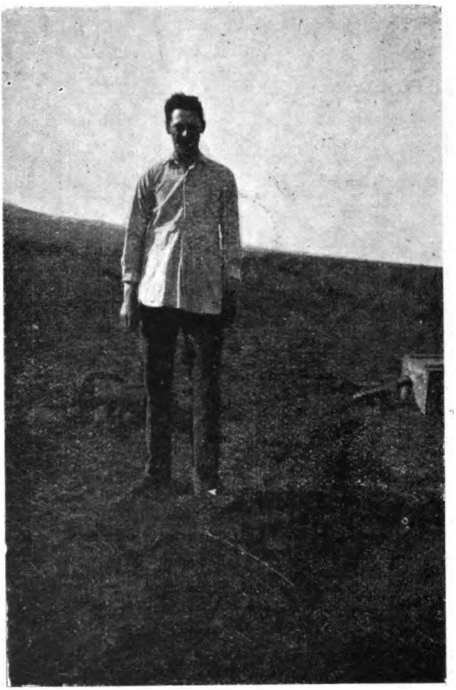
stock trekking north, but they were too far off to be attacked.

On the 28th the sick, wounded and prisoners were sent into Ficksburg, and Major Bulfin brought his column



Lieut. Hon. W. E. Egerton ("a short shift".)

and joined us. The next morning we moved our camp on to fresh ground.

At 2 a.m. on the 30th Lord Basing moved out with all three squadrons, pompom and one 15 pounder, and in co-operation with 150 M.I. of Bulfin's, surrounded and searched Elandskloof (165), Wonderkop (166) and Witte-krans (161). Elandskloof was rather an impossible place,

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as it was miles long and required a good deal of surrounding. We got round it but were observed by Boer outposts and only caputred two Boers and two boys, who got out of a cave which they had reached by a rope. We also got a very large quantity of cattle, sheep, ponies, cape-carts and grain. Boers were in force on Wittebergen Nek about 2000 yards from the Kopje which our advance guard held, and shots were exchanged. We returned at midday. Our convoy, with Bulfin as escort, went into Ficksburg next morning. The results of the past month were not very great, but during a large part of it, whilst under Ternan, we were unlucky. There was some fever amongst the men, but we heard our wounded and sick officers, Egerton, Calvert, Ripley and Knowles, were doing well. At night it was considered probable that we should be attacked, as our scouts had reported that the Boers had held a Krijgsraad at Hermitage Farm, about 15 miles off, and had dispersed in various directions. Thus we rather contemplated an enveloping attack upon our camp, as the Boers could easily collect some thousand men within a very short distance. All precautions were taken and outposts were doubled, but nothing happened. Our convoy came in safely on February 1st, and orders were received to march to Uintjes Hock.

Major Bulfin's column now formed part of ours for the time being as we were neither of us strong enough to take the offensive and at the same time guard our camp and baggage.

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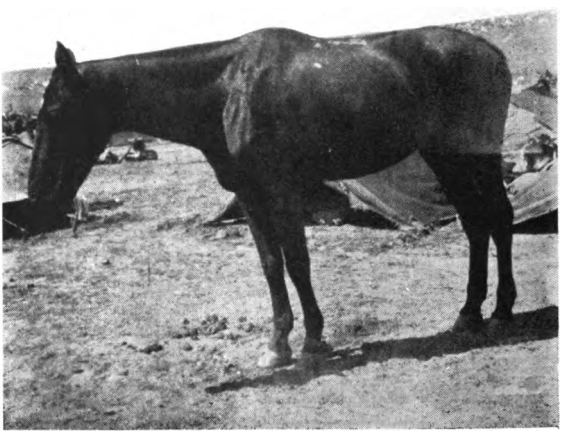
PERIOD VI.

On February 2nd we marched at 6 a.m. for Uintjes Hoek (about 24 miles) working in co-operation with Pilcher's column. We had to pass through Weltevreden Nek, a very strong position. It was held, but not strongly, and our advanced guard under Captain Makins went on



Boer Pony.

quickly about 5 miles ahead and rushed the position. On our force coming up, large bodies of the enemy were seen holding a position in front, and also making their way northwards. The convoy was parked, and Makins supported by McNeile went on to dislodge and pursue the enemy in front. This he did and pursued vigourously to Uintjes Hoek.

Lord Basing brought on the guns to a position over-

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looking the plain on the western side, and opened fire, while Major Bultin went with his mounted infantry to cut them off, or pursue.

At this moment Colonel Pilcher's column was viewed further west, and his men on the plain took up the pursuit there capturing all the cattle. The convoy moved into camp at Uintjes Hoek, and found that Captain Makins had pursued for about eight miles till he came to the end of the plateau. Most of the Boers had slipped away down cattle paths to either side, but going along the high ground, which seemed to promise well for success, it was found that it ended in a sheer precipice. The guides had unfortunately been out-distanced in the pursuit. It was a dashing performance on the part of Captain Makins and "C" Squadron to have turned such a large body of Boers — estimated at about 400 — out of such a strong position, and was done as usual by turning their flank. We lost one man killed, Private Daw, the only casualty. The Boers escaped toward Senekal.

The next day we did nothing except to send scouting parties well out, but no Boers were reported in the vicinity. Patrols again went out the following morning and "B" Squadron went to clear Rondehoek (38), and Bulfin's column Elandskloof (532). One prisoner was taken by the outposts and some cattle brought in.

On the 5th we stood to all day with contradictory orders; the outposts captured one Boer. Pilcher's captured stock arrived and also final orders from Sir Charles Knox, who was with Pilcher's column, encamped about four miles off at Leeuwkop.

"C" Squadron and half "A" Squadron under Major Carr Ellison started at 8 p.m. to march to Clocolan, about 25 miles away.

Pilcher was to approach from the north-west while we marched by the eastern side of Peru and Trupagani. The rest of the column left at 6 a.m. the following morning

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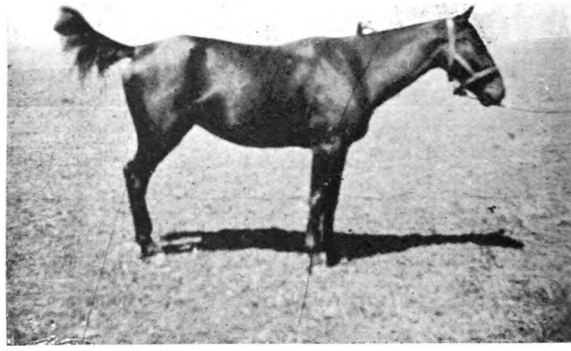
and marched to Spitz Kop arriving there at 1.30 p.m. and camping at Boomplatz (203). "C" Squadron came in at 2 p.m. having seen nothing. The expedition had been undertaken in consequence of Pilcher's scouts having captured a despatch rider to Commandant Kuhn, telling him that the country there was clear and advising to return there.

The next day the convoy went out to Ficksburg, and



Boer Pony.

"B" Squadron started at 3 a.m. to clear Trupagani, a well known laager, but it was found deserted, though some good work was done clearing. Parties were sent out in all directions clearing and collecting grain: and obtained a good many bags of mealies, mostly from kaffir kraals. On the 8th the convoy returned at 10 a.m. and "C" Squadron went out to escort it in at 6.30 a.m., and also to clear some farms. "A" Squadron also turned out to assist Pilcher in clearing the farm Bramboschfontein (163).

The column marched at 6 a.m. next morning on a very

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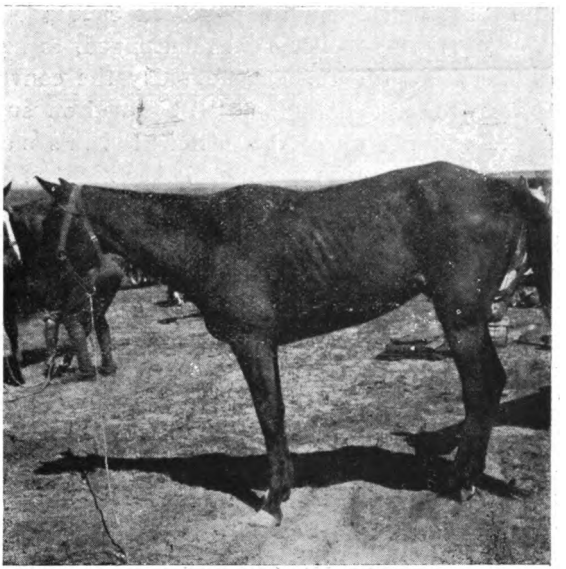
wide front, due north, about 12 miles past Wonderkop to Klipdrift (928) in the direction of Senekal. At Jobieskop the advance guard, under Captain McNeile, saw some Boers driving cattle across the plain and gave chase, capturing two Boers and about 200 cattle. Next day the column marched to Concordia, close to and just west of Gevelkrantz (146) at 6.30 a.m. with Bulfin doing ad-



Basuto Pony.

vance guard. He met about 50 Boers at Tafelberg and drove them north-east where they were strongly re-inforced and took up a position too strong to attack. He therefore gradually fell back on our camp at Concordia, about six miles South of Senekal and close to Tafelberg. We captured five prisoners. On the same evening "A", "B" and "C" Squadrons, turned out at 11 p.m. under Basing. It was anticipated that the Boers would be

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returning to Wonderkop, as we marched north, so we returned by night, posting the squadrons at Good Hope and Smallfontein, well concealed. From Good Hope a few Boers were seen and four were captured after a gallop. Sergt. A. Wilson was accidently shot dead by one of our own men and had this not happened we should have captured five more Boers. "A" and half of "B" Squadrons returned to camp at 11 a.m. and "B" and "C" Squadrons at 4 p.m. The convoy went to Vaalkop (341) where Pilcher was encamped, to hand in our prisoners and fill up. The next day the convoy returned at 10 a.m. and half of "B" Squadron superintended the winding up of the cable. Bulfin's mounted infantry went off to occupy Senekal that night and establish a fortified helio post on Tafelberg of dismounted men (17 men per squadron and 20 of Bulfin's) under Captain Pitt.

And now we must digress and explain through the medium of the Official History the first drive we had as yet participated in, — though we took only a secondary part in it. "The scheme provided for convolutions by co-operating but separated bodies, which can best be rendered intelliglible in parallel tabular form as follows :—"

FIRST PHASE.

Elliott's Column.

March East from Kroonstad—Ventersburg—Doornberg to line Lindley—Bethlehem.

Rimington, Byng, Rawlinson.

March East, right on Wolvehoek, Frankfort blockhouses, left on Heidelberg to line Standerton—Tafelkop.

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SECOND PHASE.

Elliot's column.

Wheel eastward to line of Wilge river between Strijdpoort and Majoors drift.

Rimington, Byng, Rawlinson.

Wheel south, pivoting on Tafel Kop on line between Wilge river and Standerton Railway.

THIRD PHASE.

Elliot's column.

Hold above line on the Wilge, right prolonged to Harrismith by Rundle.

Rimington, Byng, Rawlinson.

March south to line of blockhouses Van Reenen's Pass —Elands river bridge. Right flank blocked by Elliot on Wilge. Left flank passes of Drakensberg held by troops from Natal.

"The scope and intentions of these operations will be understood by reference to the map better than any written description. Briefly, their first aim was to herd the Boers of the Eastern Orange River Colony into a closed funnel, formed by the Wilge river on the one side, the Klip river and the Drakensberg on the other, the Harrismith—Van Reenan's blockhouses completing the *cul-de-sac*. Down this lane the northern columns would then sweep from its entrance downwards, pushing the enemy towards its blind end, just as the fowlers of past days used to drive wild-fowl through the decoy pipes which ended in the fatal enclosure of the net."

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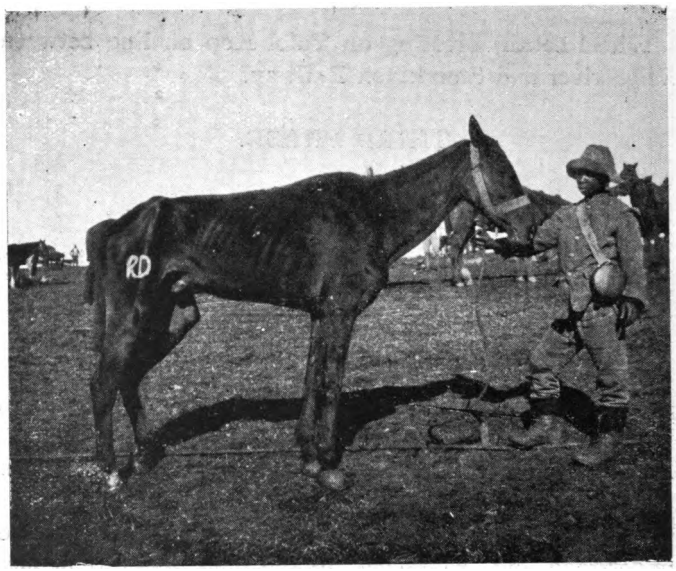
"Elliot was the first to move, quitting Kroonstad on February 12th and 13th with his left (Fanshawe) on the Valsh, his right (Lawley and Du Cane) extending southwards towards the Winburg-Senekal road. On the 14th his line from right to left was Senekal-Rienzi; on the next day from Elands Spruit to the Molen Spruit."

"On the 16th he was between Lindley and Bethlehem,



English Polo Pony.
(Succumbed the same day as this photograph was taken.)

halting on the line until the distant factors of the operations should develop. A raid by his left flank against Elandskop on the 17th resulted in the capture of 10 prisoners and De Wet's invaluable heliograph.

"Early in February Sir Charles Knox's columns were ordered to block the southern exits from the area about to be swept by Elliot's advance to the Wilge" (as related

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above) and with this object in view our column was now at Senekal. We will now return to our more local news.

On Friday, February 13th the column marched to Senekal and started to get into position for the drive above described, to prevent the Boers breaking south. "A" Squadron under McNeile left at day-break to occupy the nek south-east of Tafelberg, and to lie up till Ternan's column filled up the gap next day.

General Knox joined us next day at Senekal, and we kept our outposts very thickly posted, and joined on to Pilcher's column to prevent any breaking through. The next day Lord Basing sent out two squadrons to guard the line between Senekal and Zuring Kranz, a distance of about 15 miles, and "A" Squadron joined them. In the afternoon as the driving troops approached us, Lord Basing marched to Zuring Krans and joined the outpost line east and west with Pilcher and Ternan's column respectively, covering about 8 miles with every man on outposts, and each post only 50 to 100 yards distant. The Boers tried it once, but retired on being shot at.

The following morning (February 15th) we marched to Dorset near Rexford in front of the driving line. We saw about 200 Boers move north, from in front of our outposts. We held a similiar line of outposts to the previous night, and 8 Boers tried it, but retired, leaving one man severely wounded, who was picked up. The drive passed us, and ended as far as we were concerned; we stood fast at Dorset next day.

It was reported that the drive was a failure up to this time, the reason being that the Bethlehem Blockhouse line was not completed, being only just built, and the spaces between the blockhouses were not wired or properly guarded; and, as there was no moon, it was easy for the Boers to pass between them. This was disappointing news, as the men cheerfully had done three nights strenuous outpost duty, being all filled with keenness.

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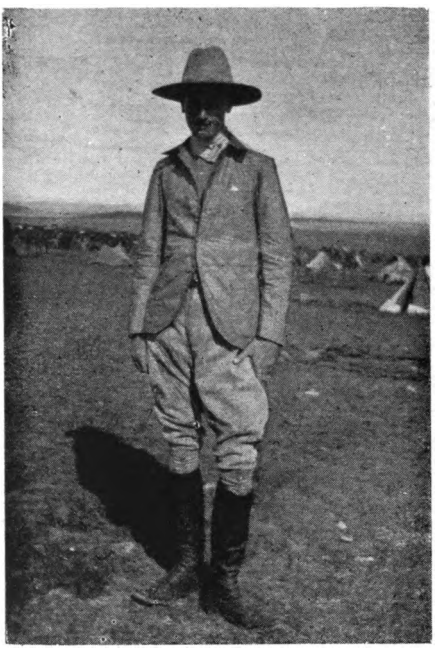
On the 17th Makins took the convoy into Bethlehem for supplies at 5 a.m. with "B" and two troops of his squadron with pompom, as escort. Bulfin escorted wagons at 9.30 a.m. to Tafelberg, brought back the dismounted post and helio from there and rolled up the cable from Senekal.



Lieut. T. C. Gurney.

On the 18th the convoy returned from Bethlehem, and our scouts having wounded a Boer through both hips, the tonga was sent out to fetch him, but could not find him; however, the scouts on going out again at night found him in a farm, but he was too bad to be brought in.

The next day we marched at 6 a.m. with General Knox

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to Osschoel (943) six miles west of Petersdale in the Wittebergen, the plan being to occupy Witte Nek and clear the Wittebergen down to Ficksburg, Ternan's column was to move by the Brandwater basin and attack Witte Nek from the east; while Pilcher was to move from Rexford farm from the north while we assisted from the south side. From Osschoel we saw a good many Boers in the mountains, and a lot of stock.

We were ready at day-break on the 20th inst. and about 6 a.m.heard Pilcher's guns and immediately 400 Boers under General Prinsloo broke to the south of us, to Petersdal Nek, which to our surprise they passed without occupying, and fled away south at full gallop across our front. We pursued all day but required another force south of us to make a capture. They had too good a start but we continued the pursuit to Hammonia, about 25 miles and over 30 the way we went, and at last only the officers and a few of the best mounted men were in the hunt. We captured three prisoners including Sergeant Schusn of the Staats Artillerie, who was De Wet's head intelligence scout in the district.

We also captured about 50 ponies and mules, and some cattle, wagons, etc. Every Boer had one or two spare ponies. The other columns occupied Witte Nek with scarcely any opposition. We camped at Helderfontein (223).

Next morning we marched to Franz Hoek, thoroughly searching the mountains and kloofs, and camped in a farm called Morning Star (99).

We picked up a dead Boer dressed in British uniform, and only knew he was a Boer by the fact of his having a few rounds of martini ammunition. We marched to Ficksburg on the 22nd, Pilcher's and Ternan's columns arriving there on the next day (Sunday) and bringing in a few prisoners, and over 4,000 cattle and herds of sheep. There was a church parade held, which was the first

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since July. We rested again the following day, being the first rest we had enjoyed since the column was formed.

On Tuesday February 25th. our column marched to Fairview (268) at 8.30 a.m., Major Bulfin going by a separate road to Towa about three miles south of us. "C" Squadron who went on ahead captured one prisoner near Wonderkop. The next morning "A" Squadron went out at 2 a.m. to lie up near Elands Kloof to surround Tobies

Lieut. J. M. Tate Attachd. A.V.D.

Kop; Ternan did the same on the North side and Bulfin on the west. Colonel Pilcher attacked Troumel that morning, driving some Boers out on to the plains, when Ternan's column pursued and captured three prisoners and

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over 1000 head of cattle. "A" Squadron captured 30 cattle and 11 ponies. On Thursday we moved camp to fresh ground at Caledonia (216) near Wonderkop, and our scouts reported that the country was clear of Boers.

The next day we spent in agricultural pursuits, and clearing up the country; we dug up some hidden grain, reaped and destroyed growing mealies, while the rain steadily soaked us. The month of February had proved fairly successful, and with a little more luck we might have made big captures on two occasions. General Sir Charles Knox left us and took over command at Bloemfontein, whence he continued to direct our movements, relieving Sir Charles Tucker. Major Carr Ellison went on six months' sick leave, and the command of the Regiment devolved upon Captain Makins.

On March 1st. we were again employed in clearing up the mealie crops, and the following day after a church parade, we marched at 10 a.m. to Boomplatz (197) near Spitz Kop, picking up Bulfin's column and taking with us over 1000 head of captured cattle. On the 3rd. the convoy went into Ficksburg under McNeile, and a party of Bulfin's was sent to roll up some telegraph cable left by Ternan toward Beginsel, but when close to Colam, it was attacked by a strong party of over a hundred Boers, and the officer, Lieut. McQueen, I.S.C. was killed while trying to rescue one of his men. The inlying picquet turned out and the Boers made off.

The following morning the convoy returned from Ficksburg and the whole force marched at midday to Wittekranz (161). The next day Boers were seen at daybreak at one of our old camps, but we had to march forward to Uintjes Hoek. A party had been sent out to our right to try to catch two Boers, reported as living in a cave on Wittekranz Mountains, but they were not at home. We marched on to Senekal (27 miles) on the 6th. and found Pilcher and Ternan there.

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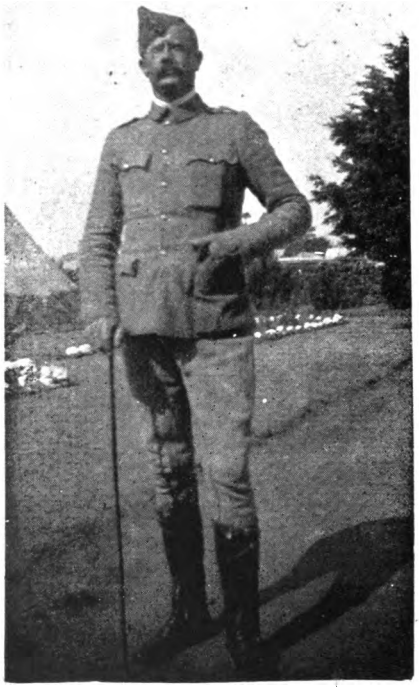
On Friday, March the 7th all the column lined out for a drive to the Valsch river blockhouse line. We were on the extreme left, with Bulfin to the right of us, Pilcher to the right again, and Ternan on the extreme right. As



R. S. M. Parsons.

both flanks were in the air, and rested on no obstacle natural or otherwise, success could hardly have been looked for. As it was a big commando of about 500 Boers held a strong position six miles to the left front of our line as we started. We engaged and dislodged them, but

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they hung on to the left and rear of our columns and we had some hot scrapping with them all day, "C" Squadron under Leighton on the left flank, and "B" Squadron under Hamilton Russell as rear guard, coming in for most of it. We were luckly in not losing any men, but No. 4247 Private Green was unfortunately dangerously wounded in the chest, when rushing a kraal; we also lost a few horses shot. We camped at Paardedrift (563) about 12 miles, and just before getting into camp saw a commando of about 500 Boers crossing our front from right to left about eight miles off, whom women at the farm told us was Hattingh's commando. We did not feel too safe that night and had a long and continuous line of outposts, exclusive of the actual camps posts, but nothing happened.

The following morning at daybreak we moved on, continuing the drive, and immediately we saw about 600 Boers on our left flank and rear; as our fighting strength was only 300 it was evident that we should soon be attacked, and so we were; all day long we were fighting a rear guard action from one position to another as we got our wagons clear, and of course were too helpless to do anything as the driving line kept moving on. However, with the assistance of our guns we kept the enemy off in spite of repeated and determined attacks, our only casuality being No. 3676 Private Dunster, who was wounded in the leg. We were again lucky and showed too bold a front for the enemy; it was a good performance and reflected great credit on Captain Makins and Captain McNeile, who were with the rear guard. We camped at Kruidfontein, after a march of 18 miles, a strong natural position, and near Bulfin, for our mutual protection. We again had every man on outposts.

On the 9th. we again moved on to the Valsch at Kranzdrift, 8 miles from Kroonstad, and only received a few shots at the rearguard: we got in touch with the King's

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Dragoon Guards from Watersburg Road. The line of blockhouses was on the further or right bank of the river, and a drive from the north from Liebenberg Vlei began next day. We held all the drifts and crossings from Geluk to Mereba Noord. No Boers attemped to cross, but there was a lot of shooting from the blockhouse line at night,

Major R. H. Carr-Ellison.

which was held by the 4th Battalion, King's Royal Rifles. The next day, the 10th., we patrolled the river carefully, searching the bush on both banks, and the convoy went into Kroonstad. We lined up along the river all night, but there was no result.

The drive we were now assisting in is thus dercribed in the Official History of the War :—"On March 10th, the

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eight columns on the Liebenberg Vlei river moved westward. Hopes of another large capture did not seem high. Several strong bands were known to have broken around the open flanks of Elliot's columns as they drove northwards: worst of all it was certain that De Wet himself was outside the enclosure, he having safely crossed the railway near Wolvehoek as long before as the night of the 5th. The only remaining quarry seemed to be a commando of some 400 men under Commandant F. Mentz of Heilbron; nor were they long in danger. On the night of the 10th. Mentz, with Rimington only an hour behind him, boldly charged the Heilbron branch railway to Gottenburg, being so feebly received by the defensive posts on the line that he got across from south to north with all his men. He then doubled eastward in the direction of Villiersdorp. Another band had previously effected an even more daring escape through the double line of columns and blockhouses between Kroonstad and Lindley. As a consequence on the conclusion of the drive on March. 13th., it was found that the whole operation had yielded but 82 prisoners, forty seven vehicles and a small quantity of stock, poor return indeed for such an effort."

"The columns immediately separated and went in opposite directions on various missions. Sir H. Rawlinson's and Lord Basing's commands, and a small force under Major E. S. Bulfin (Yorkshire Regiment), were deputed to pursue De Wet, and marched to Reitzberg. Elliot and the rest were ordered to undertake a swoop back over the ground by which they had come."

But to hark back to our narrative. We had crossed the Valsch river at daybreak on the 11th. inst. and got on the left of the driving line, moving north with our left on the railway line. Bulfin was on our right, and his right reached Rawlinson's left. We went as far as Honing Spruit where Bulfin and ourselves got squeezed out, as the front of the driving line became narrower; the drive

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ended at Rhenoster river, between Koppies Station and Heilbron. We camped at Honing Spruit and would have returned to Kroonstad, but we got orders that night from Lord Kitchener to move under Knox's orders across the railway next day to Witkop on the Rhenoster river, where we were to pick up the column of 300 Mounted infantry

Major R. H. Carr-Ellison, Captain G. Steele and Captain E. Makins.

under Major Tomlin, our object being to find and chase De Wet who had crossed the line at Wolvehoek on the night of the 5th—6th.

The next morning the 12th. we started early, and as there were no roads in the district the transport had to go across country. When we had got to our destination at Witkop, about 24 miles, we got a message sent out by General Knox, ordering us to go to the Lace Diamond

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Mines about 12 miles south-east, close to Rhenoster Kop. We arrived there at dusk, and picked up Major Tomlin and the 9th Mounted Infantry; heavy rain fell during the night. Orders came by a despatch rider, telling us to move next day to Bothaville in "echelon of columns" from our left. Bothaville is about 33 miles as the crow flies, but there was no road, and we must have covered at least 40 miles, for it was not till 8 p.m. in the pitch dark that we tumbled into Bothaville. From 1 p.m. it had rained continuously, the horses were quite worn out, and many had given in and had to be destroyed. Bothaville itself was under water and we were all soaked. The convoy had been obliged to follow the blockhouse line, and had camped at No. 36 blockhouse, so there was no possibility of getting it up.

We were ordered by Lord Kitchener to move next day. We had no rations or forage but Kitchener was anxious for us to get in a certain line by the afternoon and join up with Colonel Rawlinson. We therefore took only selected horses (we had lost no less than 50 the previous day owing to exhaustion) leaving the rest of the weak ones in Bothaville to come on after with the convoy. We left at 6.30 a.m. on the 14th to take up our position on the line Coal Mine drift — Mooi River farm on the Kroonstad—Klerksdorp road. About 15 miles out of Bothaville we struck the spoor of about 250 horses and a cape cart going East. We followed it with Tomlin, who marked the commando at Grootban farm (where we had expected to find Rawlinson); we started at 8 p.m. to surround the farm, but found the Boers had just moved off.

The next day we went on with Tomlin on the spoor as it appeared that it was the commando which De Wet was, or had been with, through it was strongly suspected that it had escorted him across the Vaal and was returning, a suspicion which turned out to be correct. The spoor

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went along the Kroonstad road as far as Groot Rietgat, where they had evidently off-saddled and breakfasted. It then turned left handed, and crossed the Rhenoster river at Winkel Drift, eight miles below Witkop, and the very place where we were to have met Rawlinson that day,

Lieut. T. P. Godman.

but he had been delayed by the flooded river at Witkop, and arrived after the Boers had crossed, and was again too late. We camped, or rather lay down, with Tomlin's column at Klipdrift, 12 miles from Witkop; our only food being some pigs which were found in some kraals. Part of the force moved to Paradys about 9 miles further down

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the Rhenoster, and held all the drifts. All the country was very barren and open, with no features at all, and mostly a flat sandy plateau.

On the 16th Rawlinson's column crossed the Rhenoster river and followed the spoor towards Reitzburg, where he expected to meet Major Garrat's column from Parys. All our force marched back to Coal Mine Drift (26 miles) hoping to meet the baggage and convoy there. To our joy we found it just arriving there about 5 p.m., but dead beat; and we once more got supplies.

As we were not wanted at Coal Mine Drift and expected to co-operate with Rawlinson, we marched back to Klip Drift in two short marches in order to save the transport animals, halting at Witfontein (12 miles) on the 17th. and reaching Klip Drift next day. At Klip Drift we received orders from General Knox to march to the Lace Diamond Mines to refit, so we marched to Groot Rietgat next day but on reaching Witkop, we received orders from Lord Kitchener to move to Bothaville (30 miles). We left 40 horses and 21 men at Witkop to go into Kroonstad, relieving the O.C. Witkop of nine horses. We moved straight on that evening to Groot Rietgat, and learning there that there were some supplies and remounts for us at the Lace Diamond Mines, Lord Basing ordered them by telephone to join us. Next day we marched back to Bothaville (22 miles), and crossed the Valsch river, the wagons not getting into camp till 8 p.m. Sixty eight remounts arrived, and we got orders from Lord Kitchener to go on to Commando drift (27 miles). We therefore went on next morning, and reached Colonel Colletton's camp on the Vaal at Palmietfontein, about half way, and leaving the convoy there with Bulfin, we went on with one day's supplies to Commando drift, arriving there at 6 p.m.; the last wagon did not roll up till after 8 p.m. We joined up with Colletton's blockhouse line by telegraph.

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The next day March 22nd Bulfin arrived with the convoy. We were now placed under the orders of Colonel Rochfort, who had charge of several columns assembled there.

The official History says:—"After clearing the country round Boshof during the early part of March (twenty-two prisoners) Colonel Rochfort subsequently absorbed Lord Basing's force, and crossed the frontier to take part from time to time in the series of extensive operations which were to render the basin of Harts river as familiar grond to British columns as the valleys on the Wilge and Liebenberg Vlei".

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PERIOD VII.

On Palm Sunday, March 23rd., we rested at Commando Drift during the day; Rochfort now controlled a force consisting of the following columns: Lieut.-Colonels W. H .Sitwell, Lord Basing, W. G. B. Western, Major D. P. Driscoll, G. S. Bulfin, C. D. Vaughan, P. G. Reynolds and M. Tomlin, amounting all told to over 3,500 men. "These had been placed under his command for the purpose of keeping surveillance over the Vaal drifts in the Bloemfontein district, which they did with much success."

We will now quote again from the Official History so as to give our readers a comprehensive grasp of the situation we were about to be engaged in.

"Under Kekewich, who was at Klerksdorp, were placed the recently organised flying columns of Von Donop and Grenfell, the latter recalled on March 9th from Rooirantjesfontein, where he still awaited co-operation with Lord Methuen to Vaalbank. The garrison at Lichtenburg was rapidly reinforced by the 2nd Norfolk Regiment, that of Klerksdorp by a Highland Brigade. On March 19th Lord Kitchener himself hurried down to Klerksdorp to supervise preparations for a universal effort to extirpate De la Rey, which a few days later was put into operation."

"On the 22nd Kekewich concentrated his twin forces at Vaalbank, and on the next evening the whole of the troops above enumerated marched westward in light order, without guns or wheeled transport of any kind. The first object aimed at was to get unperceived outside Hartebeestfontein, where some of De la Rey's commando were reported to have repaired after their recent triumphs. The columns, therefore, marched in close order through-

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out the night, and not until they had covered forty miles, and were well to the westward did they turn about and shake themselves out for a wide sweep back towards the line of blockhouses along Schoon Spruit, which had been strengthened by two battalions of Highlanders. This manoeuvre, it will be seen, was to be in the Western Transvaal, the first of the greater drives, such as in other parts

Vaal River. Bloemhof.

had for some time constituted practically the whole of the offensive tactics of the campaign. As the columns faced round and extended, they became aligned in the following order from left (north) to right: Kekewich, his left grazing the Lichtenburg—Vaalbank blockhouses, threw his right flank down to Geluk on the Little Harts River: next to him came Sir H. Rawlinson, who covered the country to Gestopfontein, where F. W. Kitchener (who

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had a triple command of columns under Colonels W. H. M. Lowe, G. A. Cookson and Lieut-Colonel J. L. Keir) took up the line to Zwartrand. The circuit should have been closed by Rochfort's forces moving up the Vaal, and with their right on the river filling the gap from Zwartrand to Klipspruit: but Keir and Rochfort never gained touch. A glance at the map will indicate, more than any description, the vastness of this conception, and its primitive simplicity; the extraordinary difficulty carrying out even its preliminary formations in the dark, and after an exhausting march, must be left to the knowledge of military, and the imagination of other readers. Before the extension had well begun, it became evident, first, that there were fish in the net; secondly, that the meshes must be knit closer than was possible with the forces available in order to prevent them escaping. Dawn had not broken before a band of 300 Boers, disguised in Khaki clothing and shouting that they were a British Corps, slipped between the rapidly closing flanks of Lowe and Keir, of F. W. Kitchener's contingent, and escaped to the West. Others evaded the line by skirting its extreme right flank. Space fails to recount the innumerable adventures of the several columns on the way back, how here a hostile band was turned and broken, there another missed and lost, another encountered and captured. Scarcely a unit but had fighting, none but endured labour and privations, which would have been arduous had they come at the beginning instead of in the midst of a march, which was to total eighty miles, partly in drenching rain, before the troops regained their starting points. F. W. Kitchener took 102 prisoners, Kekewich 38, the last named recovered three field guns and the Vickers-maxims which had been lost in the recent disasters. Every unit scored something, and those which had less fortune than others had not the less energy and toil. When the worn-out troops were stopped on the evening of the 24th

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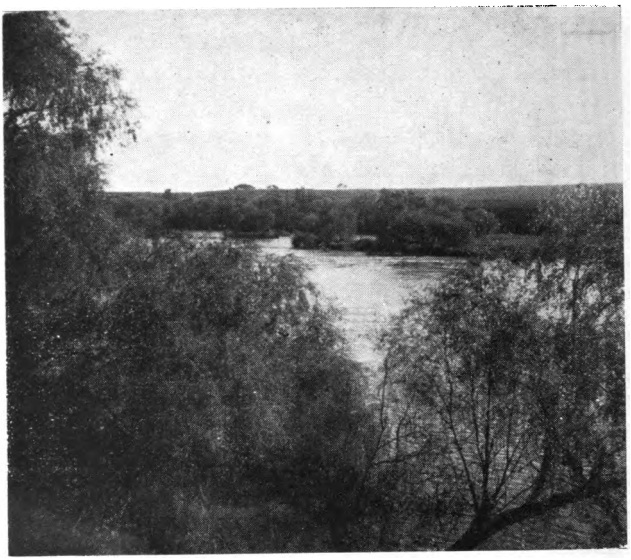
after twenty-six hours incessant movement, they had accounted for 173 of the enemy, 103 wagon and carts and 1,671 horses and cattle.Kekewich put in again to Vaalbank, F. W. Kitchener and Sir H. Rawlinson to Klerksdorp, Rochfort's column falling back on the Vaal towards Commando Drift. The 'drive' had not been vastly productive; too much, indeed, had been attempted; but the



Vaal River. Bloemhof.

results of colossal sweeps, such as this against a mobile enemy in an open country, are not to be considered failures, because the gains are small out of proportion to the expense. They will be likened to safe investments, from which with a minimum of risk, certain, if limited, increment is to be obtained."

We must now return to the part we played in the above drive. We left Commando drift on March the 23rd

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at 5.30 p.m. and started to cross the Vaal; the crossing was not completed till after 9 p.m. as the drift, which was over 200 yards wide, was both deep and difficult. Driscoll and Western were to go to Boschrand to round that place up, and then join on to Keir, who was the right of Kitchener's columns, before daybreak. Vaughan was to go to Wolmaransstad, Basing's column to Bezuidenhout's Kraal, (about five miles short of Wolmaransstad), and Sitwell was to go about half way between Commando Drift and Wolmaransstad. We caught 17 Boers in farms and kraals on our night march. At day break we were all to turn right-handed and move rapidly to the line of the Klipspruit, about 10 miles eastwards, and then get into touch and line, and drive to Klerksdorp about 30 miles further on.

We got to our place in good time, and lining out at 5 a.m. moved off to the Klip Spruit, where we arrived at 7.45 a.m. Perhaps owing to the fact that all the columns with us, except ourselves, were new to the system of 'drives', it was not surprising that touch was neither gained nor maintained. At Klip Spruit we started a commando of about 300 Boers under Potgieter. As they went on in the right direction, we held the spruit in hopes that the other columns would come up; but we could not get touch either with Bulfin on the right, or the S.A.C. on the left. As none had arrived by 11 a.m. we moved rapidly on to the line of Doode's Drift at Leeuwbosch, where the driving line contracted very much. We got a message from Reynolds to say that a large Boer convoy was in front of him moving north, and some S.A.C. (Vaughan) came up. We had seen nothing of Sitwell, and Bulfin had dropped back a good deal. We still saw Boers in front, so decided to move on and drove the Boers across our front in a northernly direction, and, as we hoped, into General Kitchener's columns. Heavy thunderstorms prevented us seeing far, but we pushed on

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and at dusk we reached the Izer Spruit. Here we saw a commando of Boers to our right front disappear into the bush along the Vaal River. It was useless now to follow them, and we looked about for signs of a neighbouring column. On retracing our steps a short way we saw a column bivouacking, which turned out to be Western's column with Rochfort, so we laagered up with them for

Vaal River. Bloemhof.

the night. We found that we had got 22 prisoners between us.

Shortly before we had reached Klip Spruit, Lieut. Knowles, with a man named Sheehan, had galloped forward and caught a Boer scout, and on reaching the Spruit another single Boer was sighted hy him. Knowles galloped on as the line halted, and when some distance in front, and nearly up to the Boer, the latter suddenly dismounted and fired straight at him and Sheehan, hitting Knowles low down in the body, the bullet going almost

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between him and his saddle. Sheehan was hit in the head, the bullet entering just above the nose and coming out at the back of the head. Our doctor brought in Knowles on his pony to a farm and we took a door off its hinges and made a stretcher and brought in Sheehan. Poor Knowles' wound proved fatal, but Sheehan miraculously recovered. We sent off two dispatch riders for an ambulance and left the wounded with our doctor (Fawcus) at the farm.

The next morning we started at daybreak to return to Commando drift, about thirty miles off. We off-saddled at the farm where Knowles and Sheehan had been left and found that the Boers had behaved very well to them. Some of them had come up after we had left, and told the women to show the wounded every attention. Leaving the wounded ones with Fawcus we went on to Commando Drift, picking up Bulfin on the road, and arrived at dusk. The horses had had enough, and one Royal Dragoon rode in on a humble "moke", which he had picked up on the veldt after his own horse had succumbed. We found that the dispatch riders, Privates Wilson and Ellison of the Regiment, had been pursued up to the Vaal by Boers, and had swum the river, being shot at by the enemy behind them and the block-houses in front, but had escaped unhit, and telephoned in for the ambulance. A very fine performance on their part, especially as neither knew the country at all. Our column had covered about 90 miles in 48 hours during this drive.

On the 26th the empty convoy was sent into Colonel Colleton's camp to fill up, taking 77 dismounted men and 33 sick horses and returning the following day, when Colonel Rochfort came back to our camp. On the 28th (Good Friday) we received a telegram from Klerksdorp, to which place Knowles had been taken, saying that he had died of his wound. He was a typical cavalry officer and Royal Dragoon, and we were left to mourn the

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loss of a most promising boy whose only fault—if fault it was—was too much pluck and dash, amounting almost to recklessness. Convoys from all the columns went into Bothaville this day and Tomlin's column started back to Kroonstad. Saturday was a rest day, and on Easter Sunday, March 30th., Lord Basing with our column Royals (300), Driscoll's (300) and Bulfin's (140) started off

Vaal River. Bloemhof.

southwards to Greylings Request at 5.30 a.m., leaving all our baggage, stores and convoy at Commando drift. The scheme was to raid Bloemhof, about 45 miles off, Sitwell via Hoopstad crossing at Bloemhof, while Basing's columns were to cross the Vet river confluence, returning to Bamboo spruit and meeting Colonel Rochfort with Western's column and our baggage etc., and making a drive up to him on the north bank of the Vaal.

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On the 31st we marched to Wegdraai about 10 miles; Sitwell moved to Hoopstad in the afternoon, leaving us with nothing but what we could carry on our horses. Our difficulty was to get to Bloemhof unperceived, and at midnight we marched to Bultfontein, near Van Zyls Drift, across a waterless, sandy plain. We remained all April 1st at Bultfontein, which was in a hollow. It poured with rain all day, and unluckily some Boers came down there for water and saw us. We started again at midnight in wet weather to cross the Vaal at Sterkfontein, which we successfully accomplished, rather to our surprise as we knew it had been held all day, but luckily the Boers had left the drift unguarded, the drift had a good sandy bottom, but was rather intricate. We surrounded Bloemhof at dawn but found it deserted except for a few women and children. Sitwell was on the south side of the Vaal, and gave us orders from Rochfort to retire across the Vaal to Hoopstad as the river had suddenly risen at Commando drift and become impassable. As all our baggage and convoy was on the North bank, and we had not a blanket or cooking pot between us, this news, which we received at Hoopstad, was not cheering. We started at 10 a.m. re-crossing the Vaal at Bloemhof and marched to Hoopstad (25 miles) reaching there at 6 p.m. in a severe thunderstorm. This was a bad time for us with continued rain, no change of clothing and no shelter, and a dirty, unhealthy camping ground. We remained where we were on the 3rd and 4th; on the latter day Sitwell moved off towards Bloemhof at 3 p.m. and Rochfort arrived in the evening. Some details and 149 horses arrived with Major Carr-Ellison, and several sick sorses went in to Eensgevonden. Some horses died here from eating poisonous grasses which appeared to be very abundant. However, on the next day, the 5th, our column with Bulfin and Driscoll's under Rochfort marched at 6 a.m. for Bloemhof. We caught up Sitwell at Steenkamps Kraal where we

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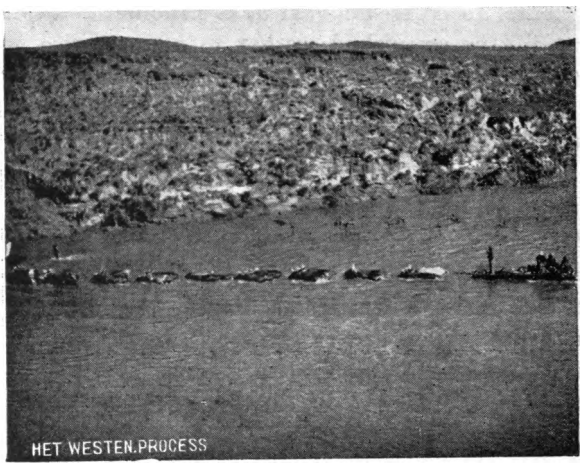
outspanned till 2 p.m., reaching the Vaal just south of Bloemhof at 5.p.m. There were a good many Boers with stock in Bloemhof, but the river was in high flood and Driscoll exchanged shots with them across the river and claimed to have wounded two of them.

April 6th was spent in getting Driscoll's Scouts across the river, some of them swam across with their horses and found a sort of boat on the far side, and by this



Vaal River.

means a good number of their men got across and occupied the town. We improvised a raft with the top of a wagon covered with a sail cloth, and stretched a rope across, though the river is over 150 yards wide here, and very deep and rapid. We could only get about 20 over in an hour. "A" Squadron was suddenly sent off to mend the telegraph wire which had been cut.

The following morning "B" Squadron was sent off with the convoy to Hoopstad and we spent the day in getting the remainder of Driscoll's Scouts across, but it

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was slow work. On the 8th Bulfin started crossing and finished the next day, the rain falling constantly, and the last company just managed to cross below the town at the drift which was still very deep. We crossed on the 9th at the drift, starting at 8 a.m., all our stores going across on the boat. "B" Squadron returned from Hoopstad with the convoy. Sitwell's and Bulfin's columns were composed of Mounted Infantry but Driscoll's column was a very heterogéneous crowd of mixed nationalities and parentage; there were English, Dutch, and some Americans who had brought mules from the Southern States; they were a useful lot, but their ways were not regular, the difficulty with them was their outposts at night round the camp. Every night a certain section was allotted to the different columns, but nobody could find Driscoll's pickets to join up with, and on Driscoll being approached he replied that we need not worry as there were several men dotted about and it was all right!

On Friday, April 11th., a few Boers attacked our outposts during the afternoon, but were quickly driven off by the inlying picquet. At 6.45 p.m. Rochfort took out our column, together with those of Driscoll, Bulfin and Vaughan (about 1,200 strong) carrying three days' supplies, but no wheeled transport except an ambulance. We went due north, and from information obtained on our way, we surrounded some bush near Hartsfontein, about 25 miles north of Bloemhof, and captured a cattle laager, with a few prisoners, horses and wagons. We approached from the north, Vaughan from the west and Bulfin from the south. The last named went in before it was light and five Boers got away behind him. We moved on at 9-30 a.m. and halted at a dam on the farm Kareeboschfontein. A bad thunderstorm came on about 4 p.m. and drowned us out to such an extent that instead of going on, we started back at 6-30 p.m., while it was raining hard; it was very dark and there was

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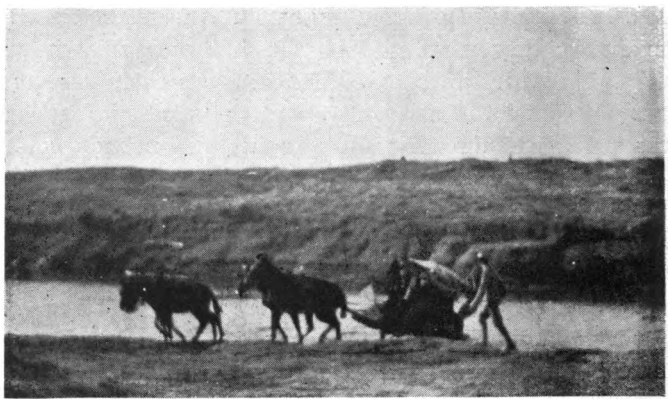
no moon. When we had gone about ten miles, it was so dark and wet, that it was impossible to maintain touch and direction, so we lay up and waited for day-break. It never stopped raining all night, and we marched into Bloemhof about 10 a.m., and to our delight found that our baggage had at last arrived from Commando Drift, with Western's column; it was exactly a fortnight since we had left it, and our discomfort during that period was intense, especially as it had been un-



Hospital Tonga. Crossing the Vaal.

usually wet. The next day (April 14th) we rested in the full enjoyment of our personal kit and belongings, the convoy going into Hoopstad with 69 of our N.C.Os and men and 21 sick horses.

The following evening the force, consisting of Driscoll's, Western's, S.A.C., Basing's and Bulfin's columns, started at 6-30 p.m. to raid Schweizer Reneke (one of De la Rey's favourite spots) leaving Colonel Sitwell to guard the camp. We made a wonderfully rapid night march of about 44 miles, mostly through bush country and arrived at the town by day-break (5-30 a.m.) We found and

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captured a good many Boers in the town, which is on the Harts River, about halfway between Bloemhof and Vryburg. On occupying a kopje just north of the town, we saw a Boer convoy of fifty wagons with a large escort about two miles away. The S.A.C. gave chase together with our column. We captured several wagons and a lot of cattle but the Boers had too good a start and after chasing them for another ten miles, we had to give it up, as our horses were beat after our long night march. We went back to Schweizer Reneke and spent the night there. We left the town at 8 a.m. for Vuurfontein, Tolly de Beer's headquarters, about 15 miles off. Bulfin and Driscoll covered the retirement, and had a sharp rear-guard action, but it was successful as our force had only one man hit, and several Boers were evidently wounded. We marched in driving formation on a wide front to Vuurfontein, (61) arriving there at 1 p.m. and found three or four wounded Boers with Mrs. de Beer, whom we left. At 7 p.m. we marched till midnight, reaching Bosmansfontein (200). We started at dawn the next day (18th) on our way to Bloemhof, which we reached about 10 a.m. with 73 prisoners, 1,000 head of cattle, 40 wagons and several ponies. The raid had proved most successful; a prisoner had stated that there had been a scout watching our camp at Bloemhof up to 6 p.m. on the 15th and had then left thinking that we were there for the night and that Schweizer Reneke was safe; luckily we did not parade till 6-30 p.m. There had been quite a gathering at Schweizer Reneke in honour of a wedding which had taken place that day, and it was hard luck for the bride and bridgroom being torn asunder at daybreak from each other's arms, while enjoying their first blissful moments of matrimony. On the 18th., 27 men and 29 horses joined us and on the 19th we rested at Bloemhof quite content with our success.

The official history relating to these few days says :—

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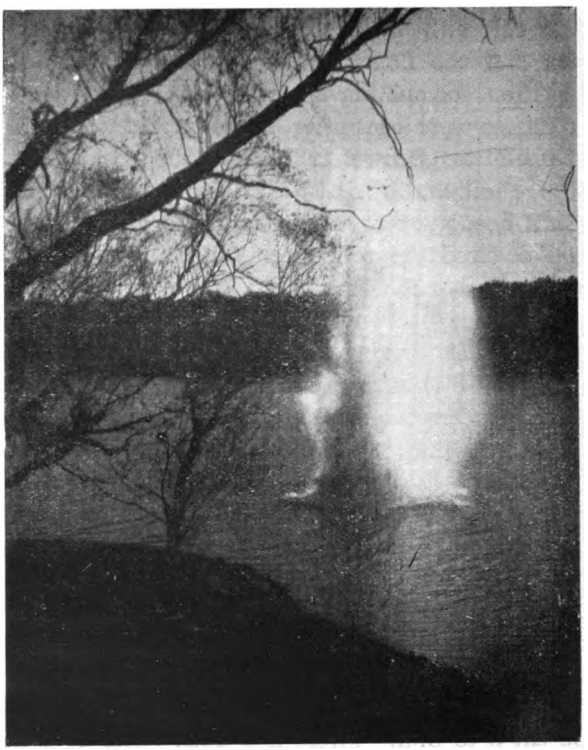
"After sundry minor adventures on the banks of the Vaal during the first week of April, Rochfort had concentrated his column at Bloemhof, whence on April 12th. he made a night march, capturing a small laager (five



Catching Fish in the Vaal. (The explosion of the Bomb.)

prisoners) at Kareeboschfontein to the North. The mounted troops, 1,200 strong, were ordered to go to Vuurfontein with the object of mutually co-operating with Sir I. Hamilton but torrential rain, falling on the 12th sent the troops back to Bloemhof, when a march of the same distance westwards would have resulted in the

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interception of some of Kemp's defeated bands. Almost equal results were, however, obtained a few days later, when Rochfort, having carefully laid his plans, surrounded Schweizer Reneke before dawn on April 16th. Well nigh every burgher refuging therein was taken, including Douthwaite, a well known commandant, also one of General de Wet's adjutants, and a brother of the renowned De la Rey. In all fifty seven prisoners were captured. On the 18th Rochfort marched back to Bloemhof; his flankers discovered twelve Boers, part of the ungathered harvest of Rooiwal, lying wounded in farmhouses on the way, on that day, and five more on the next, when the force evacuated Schweizer Reneke, followed by a hot fire from T. de Beer, who entered the town as soon as the troops were clear. The Boers lost several men, and were deterred from coming to closer quarters. Rochfort next based himself on Hoopstad, in the Orange River Colony, whence he raided the farms in the intricate "pan" district towards Boshof. By means of good information a laager of twenty five Boers was successfully surprised at Groot Gannapan on April 23rd. Rochfort then swept both banks of the Vaal between Christiana and Bloemhof, around which he continued to roam until called upon to take part in more important operations in the first week of May."

We will now go back to our diary. We had a Church Parade on Sunday 20th., for a change, and Makins took in the convoy to Hoopstad with a mixed escort; Sitwell's column left us to escort our convoys between Hoopstad and Eensgevonden station. On the 21st the force left Bloemhof at 7.30 p.m. and marched to Hoopstad, avoiding the road. All the columns were present, leaving details to guard the camp of 200 infantry and guns. We reached Hoopstad and remained there all that day; at 6.30 p.m., we marched southwards for Boesmanfontein about 25 miles south west on the way to Bultfontein, sec-

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ing a few Boers hovering about, and capturing some cattle. There was a total eclipse of the moon. We remained at Boesmanfontein all day, saw a few Boers, and rounded up some farms but found nothing. We started again at 6 p.m. for Groot Gannapan, about 20 miles north, reaching

Lieut. and Quartermaster F. Burch.

it about 1 a.m. We surrounded several farms there, capturing some prisoners and a good deal of stock. We stayed on till daybreak sending on Driscoll's Scouts and the S.A.C. about six miles to another farm, which was said to be occupied. We started again at dawn for

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Helpman, on our way back, reaching there about 11 a.m., Driscoll's and S.A.C. joining us *en route* with some more prisoners and cattle. Water was very scarce. We then started back at 5-30 p.m. through thick bush, a twenty mile march, reaching Bloemhof about 2 a.m. on the 25th with 25 prisoners, about 800 cattle and a number of wagons. The next day we rested at Bloemhof.

On April the 27th we started at 7 p.m. for Christiana about 35 miles, leaving Western's column to march next night on the south bank of the Vaal, to a line which we could drive up to. One of Driscoll's Scouts fell down a well about 20 feet deep with his horse; the man was rescued but the horse was destroyed. We reached Christiana about 6 o'clock next morning, rested there for the day, and started crossing the Vaal at 7 p.m. Driscoll's and the S.A.C. under Colonel Rochfort went to Leeuwfontein about 20 miles south east of Christiana. Basing with our column and Bulfin's, left for Riet Vlei, about 18 miles away and 3 miles South of Leeuwfontein. We dropped Bulfin at Hout Nek, seven miles short of Riet Vlei. We found Riet Vlei deserted and waterless; there were several farms there supplied by windmill pumps which were broken. The nights now were bitterly cold, and conversely the days more oppressively hot. We started at daybreak again for Roodepoort, where we expected to meet Colonel Western's force, and got touch almost immediately with Bulfin and Rochfort; we reached Roodepoort about 9-30 a.m. The S.A.C. who were between our column and Driscoll's had a bit of fighting at Prestonpan, south of Leeuwfontein, capturing two Boers and killing a veldt-cornet; they had one man killed and one wounded. There were very few cattle about and we found practically nothing. We rested till 2 p.m. and then started for Bloemhof through thick bush, reaching there in pitch darkness about 9-30 p.m. The sky was overcast and it was difficult to keep direction. We had

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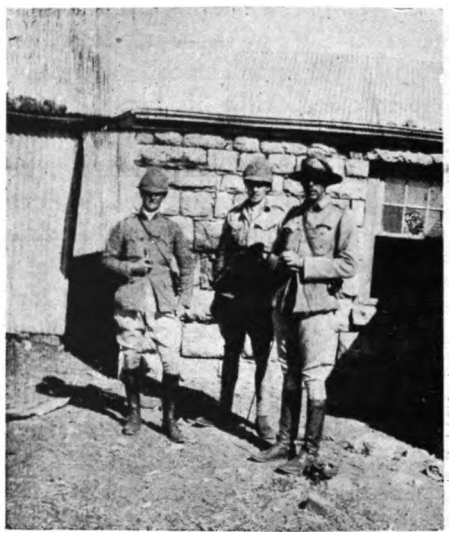
marched 80 miles in 50 hours, but the raid was not very successful.

On April 30th we rested at Bloemhof. It will be seen from our operations that night marches were the "order of the day." These required a good deal of luck to make them successful, as the commandos were constantly moving their laagers, and always after dark; besides,



Lieuts. P. E. Hardwick, Hon. W. E. Egerton, Hon. C. H. C. Guest.

which they had always special picquets watching our camps, to report any movement and warn the commandoes. Night marching for four nights in succession is very tiring for the men, but the horses find it easier, as they can graze all day, and no forage is needed, and marching in the heat is avoided. The men carried tea, coffee and biscuits in their haversacks, depending upon captures for their meat; nosebags were all filled with

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grain, pack-horses carried extra supplies, and some mealies were occasionally found.

Our operations were now restricted owing to the Peace Conference and we engaged not to molest any commando whose leader was at the Conference, therefore, we did nothing much for the next few days. "A" Squadron under McNeile left us to do escort duty with the supply column between Bloemhof and Eensgevonden station, a distance of about 100 miles. On the 3rd Basing with two other squadrons and Bulfin, went to Plessis Rust, about ten miles north of the Vaal to clear the growing crops and collect mealies, and returned the next day at 7 a.m. We moved camp during the next two days to a spot about a mile west of Bloemhof for sanitary reasons and on the 7th Colonel Rochfort sent the remaining women and children out of Bloemhof to join the Boers on commando as we could no longer feed them.

And now we were to start on one of the biggest drives Vryburg on the Cape Colony—Bechuanaland Railway, and one which was to be the last operation of this long drawn out war. As we have done before we will first quote from the Official History so as to give us the scope of the whole operation, before going into detail of our own doings.

"Whilst Sir I. Hamilton's troops remained a week at Klerksdorp to rest and refit, that general prepared for another great excursion across the Western Transvaal. On April 25th he made the first move of a scheme so elaborate, yet so direct in its purpose that it must be studied in detail. The main object was to herd the wide-scattered enemy into the angle of Bechuanaland, lying between Vryburg and the western boundary of the Transvaal. A commander could have set himself no more difficult, nay in its entirety, impossible task; for such a sweep, to be fully effective, must be flanked, or better still, intersected by obstacles to form the walls of the en-

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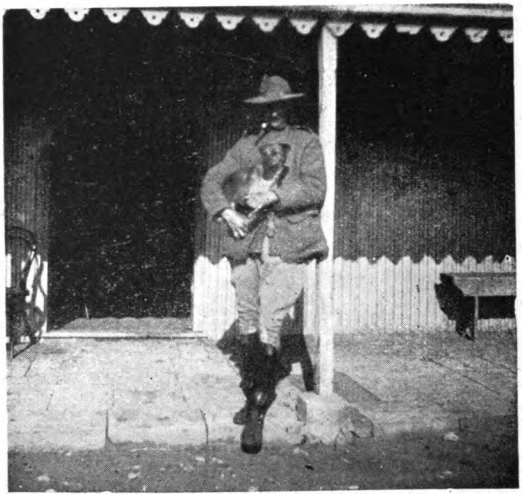
closures, such as mountain ranges, deep rivers, or the line of blockhouses which Lord Kitchener had constructed to take the place of these natural barriers. But in this part of the Transvaal no such aid existed. The country was so open and featureless that the widest possible extension would still leave its two flanks in the air, free to be circumvented by the enemy as soon as he had located them; it was so vast that double the number of troops



Lieut. H. McL. Lambert and "Scout."

could scarcely have covered it at all; finally it was so poorly supplied with water that the majority of the long array of men must always be some fifteen or twenty miles distant from the muddy pools, which alone were to be found. A bluff advance would therefore be doomed to failure, and Sir J. Hamilton determined largely to trust to deceptive manoeuvring. Everything depended upon his power to hold the enemy in front of him, and so keep them ignorant of his uncovered flanks until too late.

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For this purpose he seized upon the only condition in his favour, that of precedent. Every column or line of columns which had previously traversed the Western Transvaal had, with the exception of a small incursion by Lord Methuen, faced about after marching some distance eastwards, for the return drive towards the Klerksdorp railway. So often had this been done that the Boers had come to consider themselves safe, so long as they could only keep to the westward of the British. Sir I. Hamilton made every effort to encourage them in this belief. Behind a vale of reports, busily spread by spies and natives, that he intended to halt and turn back when within three days march of Vryburg, he moved his forces for a drive to the very edge of the board, the fortified Vryburg railway, which had been rendered doubly impenetrable by the reinforcement of four battalions of infantry, and six armoured trains, each provided with a powerful searchlight. Two additional columns were now at his disposal, Thorneycroft's and that of Rochfort, who were on May the 6th at Bloemhof. By the evening of that day Sir I. Hamilton had leisurely manoeuvred his columns into the westward, facing line Rooirantjesfontein (Kekewich)—Korannafontein (F. W. Kitchener). It will thus be seen that a great gap existed between Kitchener's left flank and Rochfort, and much depended on this being undetected before it could be closed. On May 8th Rochfort began to reduce it by moving inwards to the line Vuurfontein—Kareeboschfontein, athwort the road to Schweizer Reneke, while Sir I. Hamilton pushed his four columns forward through the line Biesjesvallei—Schoonoord—Kareekuil—Witklip up to that of Great Harts River. This was the critical moment of the operation. The enemy who had sidled away westward, narrowly watching the advancing line of troops, now expected them to turn and make Eastward. The continuation of the westward march could not fail to

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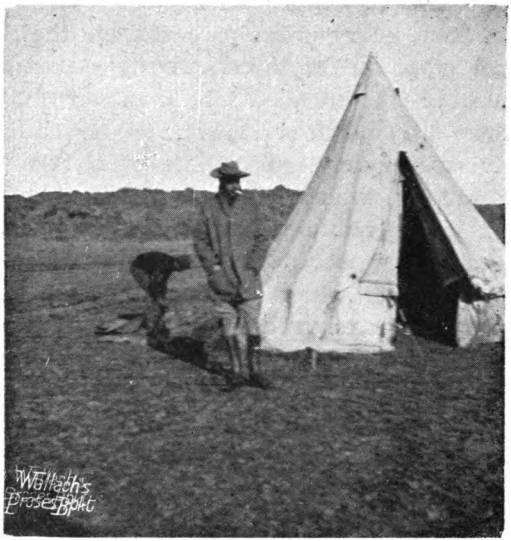
enlighten them as to the real intention, and there were still wide avenues of escape. On the morning of May 9th Rochfort was at Schweizer Reneke, while Kitchener on his right was nearly twenty miles distant to the north of Schietfontein, forming there the left of the line which now curved through Bulpan and Geysdorp to the western railway at Maribogo, a secure barrier to any attempt at



Captain the Hon. A. Hamilton-Russell.

escape towards Lichtenburg. In addition to the interval between Kitchener and Rochfort, the latter had now opened another on his own left flank, by which the enemy could get out in the direction of Christiana. To deter them from these gateways, Hamilton adopted a ruse worthy of his resourceful antagonists themselves. Sending a few scouts at dusk to spread themselves thinly across the gaps, he instructed them to set fire to the

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veldt, so that when the Boers, now thoroughly alarmed looked out into the night for the dark gaps which should show the empty spaces between the bivouac fires of the columns, they beheld instead an unbroken line of light stretching from Maribogo down to the Vaal, and thought themselves shut in."

"On May 10th the line, picking up a few prisoners on the march, advanced to the Transvaal border, and throwing forward its flanks, drew an uninterrupted arc from Doornbult Siding, where Kekewich rested his right flank, to Brussells Siding, while Rochfort who was now in one line with Kitchener, touched with his left. By a curious and unpremeditated coincidence, this alignment penned the Boers into the only piece of country in which on the morrow it would be lawful to attack them. At this time the Boer leaders were sitting in conference, discussing the desirability of continuing the war, and Lord Kitchener, in order to facilitate their meeting, had consented as one of the terms of the armistice, that all commandos whose officers were attending the conference should be free from molestation within their own borders from May 11th until the termination of the truce. On the night of the 10th Hamilton himself lay along the frontier, having pushed the enemy into British territory, presumed himself to be entitled to deal with him there. The point, however, was not uncasuistic, and might have given birth to a new and nice case of military jurisprudence, had not the Boers removed all cause of argument by throwing themselves in small bands against Hamilton's line in an endeavour to break back into their own country. In this only a single individual succeeded; the rest despite numberless devices, being turned back by the strong entrenchments which the column had thrown up on this, as on each night, of the movement. It was a strange scene. The troops were now within fifteen miles of the railway, and the armoured trains steaming up and

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down, threw across the dark veldt, from their search-lights great beams of light against which the enemy's bands were plainly silhouetted to the eyes of Hamilton's soldiers, whose defence had been traced not on the crest of the undulations, but half way down the reserve slopes, bringing the skylines to deep relief. It was a grevious night for the Boers, and its effects were evident next day. No sooner had Thorneycroft's column moved off in its place between Kitchener's and Rawlinson's for the last drive to the railway line, when De Lisle was met by an emissary with a white flag who came from 200 burghers, the remnants of the now famous commandos of Van Zyl and De Beer, who desired to surrender. As the British Troops moved onwards, these were met and disarmed, and in a few more hours the whole of the British line moved up to the Kimberley railway, having captured 367 prisoners of war. Thus ended an operation which may be taken as a type of many, of which space has forbidden so full a record. The difficulties entailed in its successful performance can only be outlined, though to ignore them might be only to inspire a delusive confidence in the future. Only a trusted and trusty commander with a corps of troops of supreme excellence can carry such a scheme out. Hamilton had under him men who were willing to make no halt by day, and take no rest by night, for each long day's march, often nearly foodless and waterless, was intended to bring them only to their place of vigil or fighting. Their labours were almost incredible. Long and deep trenches, impervious wire entanglements, fortified laagers of wagons, redoubts to hold from seven to twenty men—not only bullet proof but proof against artillery—sprang up each night under the hands of men who had already performed the extremity of toil since dawn, and were to do the same on the morrow and for days after. During the day every man was a scout; at night not one but had to become a

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sentry, with eyes, ears and rifle alert. Such efforts would cause more casualities among inferior troops than among their adversaries. For a like reward they have seldom been equalled by soldiers in the field, and indeed there have been few who could have sustained them. Finally, to achieve success in a manoeuvre of this scope and nature, there must be a leader, who is able to issue the clearest orders, and to consider them, once launched, as irrefragable. To attempt to supervise or alter the details of so vast a line when once put in motion would result in confusion. In the manoeuvre above described Hamilton, having given to his subordinates their several lines of march, in itself a calculation of no small complexity, left everything else to their discretion. Their modes of marching, scouting, picqueting and fortification were all their own and differed widely, though all were uniformly successful."

"On May 17th the columns began to return independently of their respective bases. On the 23rd Hamilton was back at Pretoria, where a week later peace was signed."

Having given this somewhat long account of our last drive from the Official History, we will now go back to our own personal narrative.

Our columns were divided into three groups, viz.: No. 1, consisting of Colonel Western, who took Bulfin with him,—No. 2, consisting of our own, and Driscoll's Scouts,—No. 3, consisting of Colonel Sitwell with the S.A.C. Rochfort came with our group.

Western started on the night of the 7th of May and marched to Kareeboschfontein about 20 miles north. We started at 6 a.m. on the 8th., taking four day's suppplies for ourselves and Western's baggage, and marched to Kareeboschfontein, when Western moved on to the next farm. The same day Sitwell marched to

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Vuurfontein 23 miles north-west. All three groups marched the next day at 5.30 a.m. for Harts River. No. 1 moved to a point about five miles north of Schweizer Reneke and joined up with Sir I. Hamilton's left. No. 2 went to Schweizer Reneke, and No. 3 about five miles south of it. All lined out at nightfall, and held a continuous line of outposts,—about 100 yards between

Lieut. H. McL. Lambert.

picquets. We caught two prisoners and about 500 head of cattle.

On May 10th the whole line moved off at 7.30 a.m. in driving formation; a dense and continuous line of scouts supported by squadrons at about a mile interval through difficult bush country. We saw tracks of Boers moving west all day, and in the afternoon we came across Van Zyl's Laager, getting his papers and capturing one prisoner with some stock and carts. Van Zyl

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was a Cape rebel. We bivouacked at Lilliefontein on the British Bechuanaland frontier and lined out as before. No Boers got through.

Next morning we drove on to the railway between Vryburg and Brunetts Siding. All the Boers inside the line moved north of Vryburg. We only caught one,

Lieuts P. Leighton and P. E. Hardwick.

who we found hiding in some bushes. We camped at Tygerkloof, Western at Vryburg, and Sitwell at Brussels Siding. The result of the drive was very satisfactory as our left flank was open, and so we had not expected much.

On May 12th we sent into Vryburg (about six miles) for supplies, and rested the next two days. On the 15th

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we began our march back to Bloemhof (about 80 miles) and bivouaced at Malalaring, capturing two Boers, 100 head of cattle, 250 sheep and two wagon loads of grain. Western was about two miles off in a bushy, rocky place, and on reaching his camp next morning, we found that he had been heavily sniped during the night, losing one man killed and three wounded, besides several horses. We marched on and attacked the Boers who were in the bushy hills, and easily drove them out. They followed our flank all day, but there was no damage done, and we bivouacked on the Harts River near Abel's Kop at Goudplaatz, about two miles south of Western, who was sniped at to some extent after dark. On the 17th we marched to Vuurfontein (61), Western to Mooifontein. We found an old laager, destroyed and took a lot of grain, wagons, and some things which had been captured from Lord Methuen. Western took three prisoners.

We started at 6.15 a.m. and seeing several Boers coming down to our camp, we left a party of Driscoll's Scouts, who were doing rearguard, to lie up at some farms. They had a good deal of shooting, but owing to the men not holding their fire, were not successful. We outspanned at midday at Boschfontein and reached Bloemhof at 5 p.m., with five prisoners, three surrendered Boers, and a quantity of stock and wagons.

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PERIOD VIII.

We found Prince Francis of Teck at Bloemhof, who had come to join us for the first time during the campaign, and now unfortunately too late to do actual soldiering with his regiment; he brought a draft of 73 men and 80 horses. Peace negotiations were going on and the air was full of peace rumours. The rest of the month was spent in getting the men and horses fit, and schooling remounts in case the negotiations fell through. "A" Squadron rejoined us on the 25th from their escort duty to Eensgevonden, bringing another draft of 37 men and 41 horses. "B" Squadron who had gone in with a convoy to Kroonstad on the 27th also brought out a draft of 22 men and 29 horses. We were now better equipped and mounted than ever we were, and out of 830 men, we had only 30 in hospital. There was still one English horse left in "C" Squadron, which had come out from England with us; it was looked on as quite a curiosity and was well nursed. Lieut. P. E. Hardwick rejoined us on the 25th from General Burn-Murdoch's staff at Newcastle.

On June the 1st we heard that peace had been signed the previous evening and, there was general rejoicing thoughout the camp; nearly three years continuous campaigning without a break was enough for the biggest fire-eater, and we were very anxious to hear what terms had been made. It was very difficult to realise that there was really peace, as the war had seemed a lifetime; everyone had become so used to a condition of war, that a condition of peace seemed to belong to some former existence. We naturally kept up all precautions, as it would take some time before the news could be communicated to all the Boers in the country.

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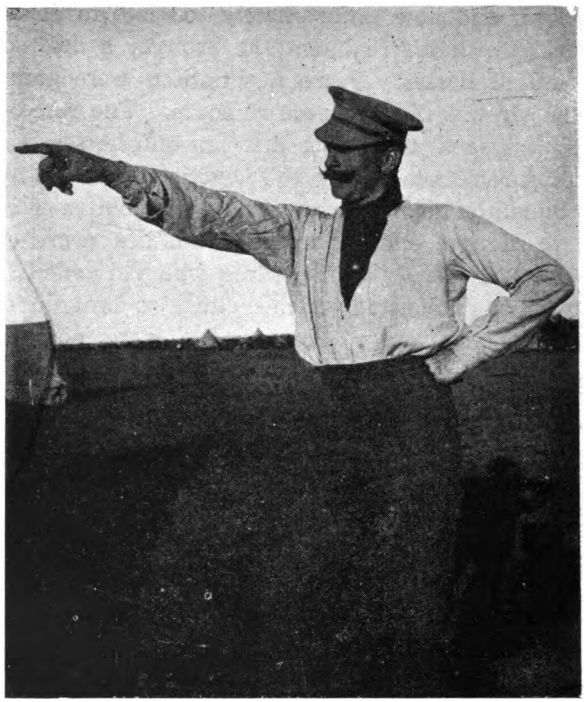
We had been kept on continual tenterhooks during the days when the negotiations had been going on. Prince Francis of Teck had been sending and receiving cryptic telegrams from a friend on the staff at Pretoria. On the 19th he had sent "II Kings IX V17" which read:



H. S. H. Prince Francis of Teck D.S.O.
(posing for the photographer.)

"And there stood a watchman on the tower of Jezreel, and he spied a company of Jehu as he came and said, I see a company. And Joram said: Take a horseman, and send to meet them and say is it peace." To this an answer came back next day "Proverbs XVIII V 13,"

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which read: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth, it is folly and shame unto him." This gave no information, but later on he received a wire "Hymns Ancient and Modern 537 Verse 5, line 1." On reference to this we found "Peace perfect peace our future all unknown," which was only fairly satisfactory. Our hopes were then dashed to the ground by receiving "Hymns Ancient and Modern 269 verses 1 and 2," which read:—

"Christian! seek not yet repose,
Hear thy guardian angel say;
Thou art in the midst of foes;
Watch and Pray.

Gird thy heavenly armour on.
Wear it ever night and day;
Ambushed lies the evil one;
Watch and Pray."

However just before the news of peace was generally known Prince Francis received another wire referring to "Hymns Ancient and Modern 537, verse 5, line one," which was looked up and found to be, "The Strife is o'er, the Battle done,"—; which was soon followed by the Commander-in-Chief's wire officially announcing that peace had been signed.

On June 1st Prince Francis of Teck left us to go home for the Coronation, and a party of 28 N.C.O.s and Men, and 35 sick horses, went into the base under Sergeant Walker. On the 4th the following selected party started for Fourteen Streams to proceed to England on board the S.S. Bavarian, in order to represent the regiment at the Coronation of King Edward the Seventh:—

Captain E. Makins, Sergeant Madigan, Corporal Tredgold, Lce.-Corpl. Saunderson, Private Beeson, Private

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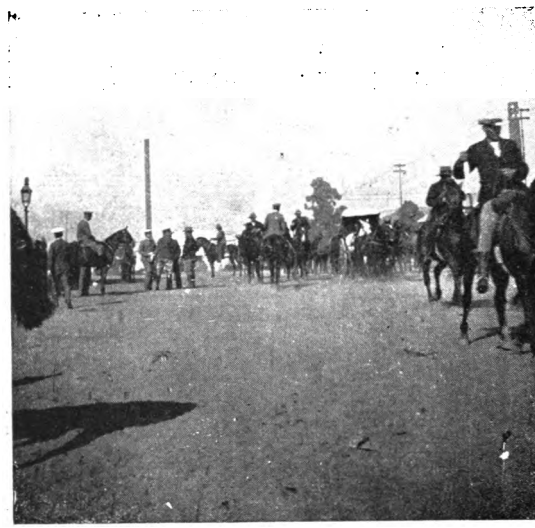
Wiles, Private Williams, Private Neath, Private Kelly, Private Bosley, Private Greenfield.

"C" Squadron escorted them as far as Christiana; a few Boers were seen, and some women at a farm, who on being told that peace had been signed, asked "Which side has won?" There was an officer and ten N.C.O.s and men from every regiment, colonial and regular in



Arrival of General De Wet at Bloemfontein on his way to the Peace Conference at Vereeniging, 1902.

South Africa, on board the Bavarian. Never before was there such an heterogeneous conglomeration of various corps, and the commander of that boatload, Colonel Fearson, had not a bed of roses on the voyage home. The ship arrived at Southampton just in time for the date of the coronation, which was doomed not to take place owing to the illness of the King. Every arrangement had been made to give the shipload a good time, but after being

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met and addressed by Lord Roberts at Southampton everyone dispersed to their homes.

On June the 7th camp was shifted a short way in the direction of Christiana, and twenty two Boers surrendered and took the oath of allegiance. On the 11th the regiment furnished an escort of 40 N.C.O.s and men under Hardwick for Colonel Rochfort, who proceeded to Schweizer Reneke to take surrenders and administer the oath of allegiance to the burghers of the district. The party, which arrived there next day, was accompanied by a large supply column in charge of Captain and Quartermaster F. Burch, which dispensed food and blankets to the burghers, their wives and families, many of whom were destitute. It said a good deal for the tenacity of the Boers to see so many of them clothed in dressed skins, made up by themselves, and a large number wearing socks made by their women from natural lambs wool, excellently knitted and very warm. The majority of them had no underclothing of any sort. The men who surrendered chiefly belonged to Tolly De Beer's, Van Zyl's and Marais' commandos. Five hundred and ninety men surrendered, and took the oath, and handed in 620 rifles, most of which were Lee-Metfords. There were very few Mausers, as latterly they had almost entirely depended upon the ammunition, which they could capture from us, to keep up their supply, so their Mausers were of little use to them. What was done with their Mausers can only be conjectured, but they were probably buried. They produced also a 15-pounder gun belonging to the 38th Battery R.F.A. which they had taken from Methuen a short time before, but had no ammunition for it. After taking these surrenders and distributing food, etc., Colonel Rochfort returned to Bloemhof.

On June 16th Colonel Rochfort's force was broken up, and on the following day the regiment started for Bloemfontein and after six days march via Lake Warden (7

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miles), Hoopstad (18 miles), Rondeheuvel (18 miles), Bultfontein (15 miles), Boschjeslaagte (19 miles), Niekerks Drift, Modder River (22 miles), reached Bloemfontein on the 23rd at 4 p.m.; when P Section Pom-Pom

Lieut. M. Knowles.

and 76 Battery R.F.A. left the column and went to the R.A. camp.

On June 28th Lieutenant P. E. Hardwick and 100 reservists left for home via Port Elizabeth, and on July 5th another 100 reservists left for Cape Town under Lieutenant W. D. Grant, and the G.O.C. Bloemfontein presented a Distinguished Conduct Medal at the station

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to No. 3516 Private L. C. Lloyd for his action on August 20th 1900. Lord Basing went home on four months leave on the 11th July, and on September 18th the regiment left Bloemfontein by rail for Cape Town, and embarked for England on the S.S. Kildonan Castle on the 24th.; after a fair voyage they arrived at Southampton on October 11th., having been absent from England three years all but nineteen days. The regiment then proceeded to Shorncliffe where it was quartered for a little over a year, leaving for India in the S.S. Soudan (P. & O. Transport) on January 27th 1904, going abroad for the first time in its history except on active service.

After being reported as lost in the Bay of Biscay in the London papers, the regiment arrived at Bombay on February 19th., reaching Lucknow by train via the various rest-camps en route—staying three days at Deolali—on February 28th 1904.

D.S.O. Queens and Kings Medals. D.C.M.
South African Medals and decorations.

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APPENDIX "A".

Roll of Officers, N.C.O.s and Men killed, died of wounds, disease, or other causes. South Africa 1899—1900.

OFFICERS.

Rank and Name.	Cause of death.	Date of Death.
Capt. J. W. J. Hardman.	Enteric	30 5 00
Lieut. T. D. Pilkington.	Killed in Action	11 7 00
,, M. Knowles.	Killed in Action	28 3 02
2/Lt. P. F. Forbes Leith.	Enteric	31 12 00

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN.

Reg. No. Rank & Name.	Cause of death.	Date of Death.
4444 Pte. Andrews W.	Enteric	31 3 00
3532 Sgt. Allen W.	Enteric	29 4 00
3729 L/Cpl. Barnard W.	Enteric	12 3 00
3569 Pte. Browning W.	Dysentery	12 5 00
3844 ,, Bennis G.	Enteric	15 6 00
2855 ,, Bax J.	Enteric	3 12 00
4913 ,, Blair J.	Inflammation of Stomach	24 3 02
4290 ,, Court W.	Gunshot Wound	23 1 00
4067 ,, Crouch W.	Fever	17 4 00
4312 ,, Carley P.	Enteric	17 4 00
3216 ,, Collis A.	Syncope	8 7 00
4336 ,, Chillmaid.	Drowned	12 3 00
4776 L/Cpl. Campbell.	Enteric	1 5 01
5026 Pte. Caley J.	Enteric	1 3 02
4207 ,, Day W.	Enteric	1 3 02
4124 ,, Daw H.	Killed in action	2 2 02
4257 ,, Farnes J.	Enteric	17 4 00
3898 ,, Fuller W. C.	Pneumonia	27 5 00
3974 L/Cpl. Fenton F.	Killed in Action	3 8 00
3842 Pte. Gilman H.	Pneumonia	13 4 00
3335 L/Cpl. Hopkins T.	Peritonitis	25 1 00
4259 Pte. Hawkins F.	Enteric	4 4 00
3581 ,, Hand J.	Dysentery	8 4 00
3994 ,, Hinckley E. W.	Enteric	20 4 00
4356 ,, Haylor H.	Enteric	16 5 00
3508 ,, Hill.	Enteric	25 5 00
3819 ,, Holt H.	Enteric	9 6 00
2122 Sgt. Higginson T.	Accident	27 7 00

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3954	Pte.	Hancock F.	Killed in action	20	8 00
3612	,,	Higgins J.	Killed in action	14	3 01
4345	,,	Head J.	Enteric	15	12 01
3363	,,	Iddenden J.	Enteric	17	4 00
3529	,,	Inghram.	Enteric	16	4 00
4780	L/Cpl.	Innes.	Enteric	5	1 02
3927	Pte.	Lynch F.	Dysentery	21	3 00
1740	,,	Lambal H.	Enteric	7	12 01
3682	,,	Mears W.	Killed in action	13	2 00
4199	,,	MitchellW.	Enteric	20	3 00
4599	Cpl.	Moore G.	Killed in action	19	9 00
4162	Pte.	Newman R.	Dysentery	28	2 00
4968	,,	Peal C.	Enteric	16	2 02
3781	,,	Pearse M.	Dysentery	19	3 00
4437	,,	Porch J.	Enteric	5	1 01
5053	,,	Plumb F.	Enteric	23	11 01
4168	,,	Rose E.	Dysentery	19	3 00
2157	Sadd. Cpl.	Rose.	Dysentery	12	4 01
2827	Pte.	Rangecroft J.	Enteric	6	4 00
4614	,,	Russel J.	Enteric	17	6 00
4212	,,	Reid T.	Enteric	30	6 00
3894	Corpl.	Reid J.	Dysentery	3	7 00
4039	L/Cpl.	Roy R.	Enteric	9	12 00
3718	Pte.	Sterritt T.	Enteric	22	4 0
4291	,,	Smith G. H.	Gunshot Wound	6	4 01
4788	L/Cpl.	Short F. F.	Dysentery	6	3 01
3671	Pte.	Thompson J.	Killed in action	23	3 01
3726	,,	Tynan F.	Killed in action	25	1 02
4349	,,	Townsend F.	Enteric	21	3 02
3112	,,	Underwood D.	Gunshot Wound	29	5 00
3375	,,	Walters F.	Killed in action	19	6 01
4059	,,	Walton E.	Enteric	20	7 00
3733	Sgt.	Wilson	Accidentally Killed	12	2 02
3503	Pte.	Warren.	Enteric	16	5 00

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APPENDIX "B".

ROLL OF OFFICERS MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES.

Colonel (local Brig.-General) J. F. Burn-Murdoch (Sir Redvers Buller 3rd. Feb. 1900—30th. March 1900—9th. Nov. 1900.) London Gazette 10th. Sept. 1901—29th. July 1902.

Lieut.Colonel The Lord Basing. (Sir Redvers Buller 30th. March 1900—9th. Nov. 1900.) London Gazette 8th Feb. 1901—29th. July 1902.

Major R. H. Carr Ellison. London Gazette 10th Sept. 1901—29th. July 1902.

Major J. M. Rogers. (Sir Redvers Buller 30th March 1900—9th. Nov. 1900.) London Gazette 8th. Febr. 1901.

Captain E. Makins. London Gazette 10th. Sept. 1900—29th. July 1902.

Captain & Adjutant G. F. Steele. (Sir Redvers Buller 30th. March 1900—9th. Nov. 1900.) London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901—10th. Sept. 1901.

Captain Hon. A. Hamilton Russell. London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901.

Captain H. D. McNeile. London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901—29th. July 1902.

Captain T. S. M. Pitt. (Sir Redvers Buller 30th. March 1900—9th. Nov. 1900.) London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901.

Captain C. A. Calvert. (Sir Redvers Buller 30th. March 1900—9th. Nov. 1900.) London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901.

Captain Hon. C. H. C. Guest. London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901.

Lieut. R. F. Glyn. London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901.

Lieut. W. D. Grant. London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1901.

Captain and Quartermaster F. Burch. London Gazette 8th. Feb. 1900—10th. Sept. 1901—29th. July 1902.

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APPENDIX "C".

Roll of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men who received rewards during the campaign 1899—1902.

Lt.-Colonel The Lord Basing.
Brevet of Colonel 1900
Companion of the Bath 1902

Captain J. M. Rogers.
Distinguished Service Order 1900

Captain E. Makins.
Distinguished Service Order 1902

Capt. & Adjutant G. F. Steele.
Brevet of Major 1900

Lieut. & Quartermaster F. Burch.
Specially promoted to Captain 1900

2835 S.S.M. Brown W.
Distinguished Conduct Medal 1902

3525 L/Sergt. J. H. Elliott.
Distinguished Conduct Medal... 1902

3591 Lc. Corpl. Holdsworth A.
Distinguished Conduct Medal 1902

3762 Private Sheehan P.
Distinguished Conduct Medal 1902

3516 Private Lloyd AA.
Distinguished Conduct Medal... 1901

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